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THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE

EDITED BY

JAMES HASTINGS, D.D.

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THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE

EDITED BY THE REV.

JAMES HASTINGS, D.D.

EDITOR OF
'THE EXPOSITORY TIMES,' 'THE DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE'
'THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS'
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THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

VOLUME II

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

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The aim of THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE is to preserve all that is worth preserving of the modern interpretation of the Bible. It is the thought rather than the expression that is retained, though the expression has not been rejected when it seemed worthy. So much, however, has been done in the way of condensing, re-arranging, re-writing, adding to, and illustrating, that the sources have not as a rule been given. But so far as these are published sermons, they will be found in the Index to Modern Sermons which accompanies each volume. THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE contains also much that is new, written by the Editor and others.

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THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

THE VARIETY AND UNITY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

As a guide in exposition it ought to be borne in mind that the twelfth chapter is really a prelude to a distinct section of the letter (xii.-xiv.) which gives a detailed answer to questions presumably submitted to Paul by his correspondents within the Church of Corinth. The chapter under review is valuable, therefore, as giving a background or point of view for the whole section. Under the topic 'The Variety and Unity of Spiritual Gifts' an endeavour will be made to set forth the broad principle with which the Apostle works. And it may be left to subsequent expositions to deal with the application of the principle to the particular instances that arose in the religious emergencies of a church which was making its first adventure and experiment in the wide field of Christian liberty, forbearance and sympathy.

I.

Introduction

Paul's correspondence with the Corinthians is remarkable, among other features, for the light it sheds upon the characteristics of the Greek people. In all her troubled and glorious history the besetting sin of Greece has been division, faction, the rivalry of parties, and their failure in what we call team-work. Except on rare occasions the people could not work together. It is an evidence of the permanence of a national type that the Greece of to-day suffers from the same defect; forces that should have built up the nation fly at one another in their mutual incapacity to seek the centre. Paul found similar faults in the Corinthian Church. It had brilliant gifts, as his letters show, but unity and the common mind were not among them; hence many of the difficulties which Chloe reported (1 Cor. i. 11) as calling for the Apostle's intervention. The twelfth chapter may be taken as typical of the sane mind of Paul in his capacity of a great master-builder; and the discussion unveils also the unhappy condition of the Christian community at Corinth, which was cracked lengthwise and across. Now this fracture in opinion and understanding was concerned with what the letter calls Spiritual Gifts.

II.

Spiritualities

Paul and his helpers were accused of turning the world upside down, and in many respects there was something in the accusation. For Christianity had created a mental and religious revolution; but, unhappily, in the excitable Greek temperament the ferment of the Spirit had expressed itself 'in vehement and impetuous ways which were not to the general advantage.'[1] The leaders followed those devisive courses against which ministers are solemnly warned on the day of their ordination. And in particular, the 'gift of tongues'—always a dangerous gift—was exercised in self-willed ecstatic ways which often led to several speakers taking, or endeavouring to take, the floor at the same moment. Dangerous guides they were and unruly feelings, which are not always absent from modern meetings both political and religious. It is significant of his opinion that, twice over, among the endowments of a Christian the Apostle sets the gift of tongues in the lowest place. This also was evidently the estimate of Jane Welsh Carlyle; discussing similar outbreaks in her own day, she retorted in a somewhat acid speech, 'If Irving had married me, there would have been no tongues.' Undoubtedly! To the Corinthians Paul said the practice was not edifying; and it never is. But the Apostle's inventory of gifts, nevertheless, bears testimony to the varied endowments and activities of the Corinthian Church—'the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith

[1] J. E. M'Fadyen, *The Epistle to the Corinthians*, 168.

and healings, the working of miracles, prophecy (*i.e.* preaching), discerning of spirits (the sifting of good from bad), and, lastly, the interpretation of tongues. These, however, were not foreign languages, but ecstatic outpourings, of which the speaker might know the meaning, though often he did not; the phenomena are even yet recognizable in religious revivals among emotional and gifted people. There is, we should note in passing, no hint that the Apostles or their helpers ever needed, like modern missionaries, to learn a foreign language, since their own Aramaic or Greek ran freely everywhere in the field of their service. In this connection it is significant that Paul and Barnabas had no gift of tongues to know the speech of Lycaonia, and gathered what the people were driving at only when they recognized the preparations for a sacrifice (Acts xiv. 11-14).

Such were the conditions of this gifted Church of Corinth—brilliant, versatile, and wonderfully exhilarating, but a trying and uncertain climate, in which the elements were not too kind to a leader's peace of mind, or favourable to that edification which is the aim of a Christian community. For it was a church where men were continually striving for pre-eminence, struggling to see who would be uppermost. There were divisions and factions; the intellectuals or highly endowed brethren looked down on less gifted members who had no showy qualities, and despised them in the spirit of the old Pharisaism which, alas, did not, and does not, belong to Judæa alone. And, on the other hand, the inconspicuous people who were pushed aside were led to undervalue themselves as of no account at all in the upbuilding of the Church. But this was fatal to all Christian purposes, for it opened the door to the jealousy and smothering discontent which are the acrid poisons of the common life.

This, then, in general was the situation to which the letters, and the twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians in particular, were addressed. We shall now have to ask how the Apostle prepared himself to minister to a mind diseased, and to heal the distemper which was sapping the strength and healthy-mindedness of Christian service in Corinth.

III.

The Remedy for Disunity

Though we may not endow Paul with an intimate acquaintance with the niceties of Greek learning, there are many indications in his writings that he knew his way about among the familiar illustrations and stock-sayings of Greek and Roman literature. His metaphor of the body and its members (v. 12), so closely inter-related in function and value, is as old as Aristotle, who applies it to the body politic; but to a Roman citizen the parable of the body would be more memorable for its use by Menenius Agrippa in healing the schism between Patricians and Plebeians when the latter were struggling for an assured place in the Roman Constitution.[1] The classical uses of the fable refer to social and political interests, but Paul applies it here to the Christian community, which itself is the Body of Christ. And the gifts of the Corinthians are compared to the several members of the human body, the eye, the ear, the foot and so forth, conspicuous and inconspicuous alike, but all equally necessary and vital. None of them exists for itself, but for the harmony and development of the body in all its parts and functions. If there be schism there, the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. If one member suffers, all the members share its sufferings; if one member is honoured, all the members share its honours. Now ye are Christ's Body, and each one a member of it with his allotted part (v. 27).

This is the Divine healing that Paul applies to the disordered tempers of Corinth. Not argument merely (though this is wise and skilful), or expostulation, or clever rebuke; he lifts up the question into another plane altogether. Into all the activities of the Church, some of whose members were absorbed in 'foolish trivialities,' the Apostle infuses a higher emotion and a Diviner life, nothing less than a life for and through Jesus—'Ye are the body of Christ.' This is the master-thought which brings all other thoughts into subjection. Paul had no other standard, nothing higher and nothing lower; for he told his disorderly Corinthians that the object of all life's activities is to represent Christ. Not self-expression, as

[1] *Cf.* Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, Act i. Scene i.

if it should be the first care of believers how their actions bore on their own individual likes or dislikes, but *His* self-expression,—this is the shining mark of the Christian fellowship. As it has been said, it is all in vain that Christ should once have been born in Bethlehem, if He is not born anew in each of us. To this ideal Paul calls the Church. Christ is brooding over the world, looking for a new incarnation. And He finds it in the mystic Body which is made out of all the Christians in Corinth, each and all contributing to His fullness and thus making the Body through which He manifests Himself to the world; the spiritual unity which represents Jesus Christ—the one Body of many members in which His Spirit lives and moves. What the eye, the ear, the hand and the foot are in relation to the natural body, so the Corinthians with their gifts are to Christ.

Thus, in view of function, or in the origin of the gifts, envy and rivalry have no place. They are given by the Spirit for the service of one Lord, and proceed from the Father of every good and perfect gift, who works in all and each both to will and to do. So Paul paints a 'word-portrait' of what church life in Corinth will look like when men have learned what is meant by the Holy Spirit.

The admonition is addressed to believers of all sorts and conditions; but specially, perhaps, to the intellectuals, and even to those who took to themselves the title of being more spiritual and religious (1 Cor. i. 10-12). One does not require to be a Philistine in order to decry an intellectual aristocracy in the Church of Christ, for the ascendancy of talent and learning, as it is sometimes exercised, may become a crying and arrogant injustice to the common brotherhood. At least, in Corinth, there were people who were inclined to think that they made the Church, and that all the rest were negligible quantities. But this is to wound the Body of Christ in the house of His friends. For nothing can be more domineering or injurious than an aristocracy of talent or even of religion. It is the old Pharisee *redivivus*, coming to life again with the same words in his heart, 'This people that knoweth not the law is accursed.'

But what if gifts be merely a distinction in function, and not a difference in values? Then the ground of pre-eminence is entirely cut away. And for 'the brother of low degree' Paul's words are a message of hope. There is no first or last with God. In the commonwealth of grace all are as necessary as the various members of the body are necessary. 'What an inspiration to the weak member to learn that he is not only tolerated but necessary, and what a rebuke to the strong to be reminded that, as in the body so in the Church, the weaker member is not only not to be despised, but is worthy of special attention and honour.'

This is the lesson of which Browning, in his parable *The Boy and the Angel*, has given the memorable illustration. Theocrite in his menial cell and at his poor trade sang daily 'Praise God,' and found acceptance there, while Blaise the listening monk said 'Well done!'

> I doubt not thou art heard, my son,
> As well as if thy voice to-day
> Were praising God, the Pope's great way.
> This Easter Day, the Pope at Rome
> Praises God from Peter's dome.

But Theocrite longed that he too might praise God in that grand way. He had his desire, and an angel, taking the boy's place in the humble cell, praised God in place of Theocrite.

> He did God's will; to him all one
> If on the earth, or in the sun.

But God said 'I miss my little human praise,' while both the angel and the boy had missed what Paul calls 'the more excellent way.' And in the end each went back to his own ministry.

> Theocrite grew old at home;
> A new Pope dwelt in Peter's dome.
> One vanished as the other died:
> They sought God side by side.

Thus the poet glorifies a man's own gift with its wholesome truth—'All service ranks the same with God.'

Such an ideal of gifts and service lies at the heart of Paul's discussion of Spiritualities. And that the Early Church learned the lesson can be seen in the various forms of Christian endeavour by which the Empire was won. The great preachers and the great evangelists were few; the showy gifts, such as tongues, fell into the background; but every believer represented in a daily incarnation something of the fullness of Christ. Historians may have

concentrated on the great names of the Church's servants, yet 'There were many brave men before Agamemnon, though they passed into the silence unsung and unknown because they wanted the sacred bard.' But the *Didache*, a very early Church hand-book, shows a wonderful picture of the service of the rank and file. Spirit-filled with the gift of Pentecost, they kept a firm grasp on every member of the Christian community, watching over them in their common life; they cared for the poor and the sick, fed widows and orphans, visited prisoners, and, as Harnack has shown,[1] they devoted themselves to reading the Scriptures wherever there was an open door; they provided hospitality for travellers, and acted as a modern labour-bureau in finding employment for stranded workmen on the road. 'So richly did the good works overflow in a social power surpassing all rival organizations and religions.' There can be no doubt that the Empire was won by this re-incarnation of Jesus Christ in the life of believers who became His Body, and represented Him to the world. Their principle and their programme abide in these three chapters (xii.-xiv.), where Paul lifts up a standard of work for all and each, equally honourable and equally necessary—the fullness of Him who filleth all things.

IV.

Modern Applications

The complaint has often been made, sometimes, indeed, with too strident emphasis, that the besetting fault of the modern Church is its defect in fellowship, and, rising out of this, its too obvious class-distinctions. But, while taking the blame, we should remember at the same time how many great churches are honourably distinguished for the fraternity and comradeship which exist among the members—where personal estimates of learning or wealth do not count. Unquestionably this is Paul's ideal of a church—one in which the rich and the poor, literally and metaphorically, meet together to call Jesus 'Lord and Master of us all whate'er our name or sign.'

If the Apostle uses the parable of the human body, it may be permissible to take a similar illustration from the trees of the wood. In passing through an old forest we see the trees standing up silent and apart, and it is difficult to think of the unity of the forest; rather, each tree seems to live for itself and by itself. But beneath the surface the roots of them are twined together in the soil out of which they spring, and in which each of them is nourished. And above, the branches of all are interwoven, reaching up to the invigorating sunshine and the common air of life. Such ought to be the unity of a church whose members do not stand in bare apartness or isolation, but have their roots of life interwoven in the one Foundation, while they reach up to the vital air of the one Spirit in whom they live. There should be no solitary Christian, for unless we are in a fellowship of life with our neighbour that despised neighbour will spoil everything. 'Whatever tends to exalt the character and purify the aims of any one class in society is sure in a greater or less degree to affect every other. If the contrary thought is calculated to alarm us by calling our attention to the infinite mischief which may be wrought by one act of thoughtlessness or selfishness, it is an immense encouragement to be reminded by the other thought, that no work for good, undertaken from unselfish motives and carried out in an unselfish spirit, can possibly be without effect.'[1]

But a recent criticism of the Church, which is both wise and sympathetic, complains that 'It has no strong roots spreading out into life.' The churches as we know them to-day are mainly *devotional* associations; they are not fellowships of life and work. We do not under-rate a fellowship of worship, but certainly it is something very much less, and infinitely less rich in content, than the community of the New Testament, where the Church exists to redeem society so that the life of man may express the Christ-Spirit—a thought which is involved in the phrase 'The Body of Christ.'[2]

This is Paul's uplifting interpretation of the body and its members. Again, to vary his illustration, if we break up light into its component parts, it shows all the colours of the spectrum, and shines white in the lily, red in the rose, and blue in the violet. But the various colours are all one light of the sun from his pure glory poured. And such are the gifts, so diverse and so united, in the members

[1] *Bible Reading in the Early Church.*

[1] J. J. Lias, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians.*
[2] See F. R. Barry, in *The Eternal Spirit*, 116-136.

of the Church. 'All these effects are produced by one and the same Spirit; each receives the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good; for by one Spirit we have all been baptized into one Body.'

It is not, therefore, a few gifted individuals in a church that can be the mirror, the expression, and representation of Christ. That is the work of the whole Body in the wide range of its activities; as missionaries tell us, 'it needs the whole race to set forth the riches of Christ.' And it may well be that the Christ we meet on 'the Indian Road' may shine more glorious and more complete than we of the West have ever thought of. So, the New Testament itself calls us to make our portrait of Jesus richer, more simple, and fuller, by calling out, by inviting and using, the gifts of every member, 'to show His worth and set our Saviour forth.'

Though in many respects the Church of to-day differs widely from the Church of Corinth, 'there are,' it has been said, 'great principles dominating the discussion in this chapter, whose application to the Church of Christ will never be exhausted.'[1] Every believer is a member of the Body, and without him, God 'lacks His little human praise'; and by so much the Church is incomplete, as an orchestra is incomplete if one instrument be silent. The obligation rests on every member to take his own share; even those whom Paul suggestively describes as 'seeming relatively feeble' are necessary. Here one thinks of humble-minded and obscure folk to whom the Apostle's generous words may well be a cup of comfort and a moral tonic. And, on the other hand, in this service no one, however important and outstanding, can say of his neighbour, 'I have no need of thee.' We all have need of one another. How often in biography or in the story of a country church the saints who build up the fabric are the people whom nobody knows; as the Apostle said of some of his Philippians, their 'names are in the book of life.' It is told concerning the dedication of a great cathedral that the question arose, whose name was to be inscribed on the foundation stone. And an inspired oracle decided for that of a poor and unknown woman who one day gave water to a thirsty horse that was struggling up the hill under the burden of stones for the building. The greatest have need of the least.

But who is sufficient for these things, so that we may be all one in the unity of the Spirit? The picture is of a good working Church, good at team-work; one in which Chrysostom's golden words are true, 'Is the head crowned? All the man is glorified. Do the lips speak? The eyes also laugh and rejoice.' So the twelfth chapter is incomplete without the thirteenth, with its incomparable Song of Love, which is the dynamic of Christian service. Love moves the world; Love is the music to which the Church answers with one heart and one step. Prophecies shall fail, tongues shall cease, knowledge shall vanish away, and every gift but love. To heal the canker of self in our gifts and service, and let the Spirit breathe and move, there is nothing except this—

Love took up the harp of life, and smote on all
the chords with might.
Smote the chord of SELF, that, trembling,
passed in music out of sight.

W. M. GRANT.

[1] J. E. M'Fadyen, *The Epistles to the Corinthians.*

The Vital Confession

1 Cor. xii. 3.—'No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.'

ST PAUL is here giving to his readers a test by which they may be able to distinguish between true and false inspiration. For some reason or other, tongues, the rhapsodies of religious excitement, seem to have been held in peculiar favour within the Corinthian Church. The historic associations of the city may partly account for this. On a mountain height just across the Gulf of Corinth there once flourished that Delphic oracle to which flocked the world's crowds. Its famous traditions may have predisposed the inhabitants of new Corinth to attach an exaggerated value to every utterance that had upon it the semblance of an inspiration. The man of an eloquence akin to trance-speech was apt to claim for himself a prestige like that attaching to the priests of the famous cave. But the Apostle tells these converts that they must no longer guide themselves by the traditions of the past: 'Ye know that ye were Gentiles carried away by dumb idols, even as ye were led.'

His first test disproves the claim to inspiration made by those who in a mysterious access of religious fanaticism spoke shameful and bitter things against Jesus. After the Apostle's departure there were Jews who found their way into the assemblies of the disciples, and, claiming to be inspired, hurled against Jesus a reproach still sometimes heard in heathen lands, that the Nazarene must have been a transgressor or Heaven would never have put upon Him these unexampled sufferings. Such blasphemies must have pained and perplexed not a few, but St Paul tells them they may let their minds rest undisturbed. 'No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed.'

On the other hand, a living creed which satisfies the conscience, purifies the life and glorifies Jesus Christ is a sufficient witness of the presence and work of the Spirit in the heart. There were men in Corinth who possessed only the ordinary gifts of the Spirit. The power of healing and of tongues was held back from them, and perhaps they felt that they were on a lower level of religious privilege than their brethren. But Paul's words would put new heart in them and encourage them to say, 'We are not passed by in the dispensation of the Spirit. It is beyond our power to heal or to prophesy, but from the fullness of quickened and renewed hearts we can testify that Jesus is Lord.'

1. The confession has for its central theme *the Divine sovereignty of Jesus.* 'Jesus . . . Lord.' This title is used in several senses in the Four Gospels. It sometimes denotes ordinary proprietorship, and is then translated 'Master.' It is also a term of courtesy, and is then translated 'Sir.' We may dismiss at once these lower uses of the word. A moment's reflection will show that, by the title *kyrios*, 'Lord,' the Apostle means all that was implied in the old Hebrew word 'Jehovah.' The true confession recognizes that Jesus is a partaker in God's essential nature and power. The Gentile needed a new view of God, very different from his old pagan one of gods many and lords many; whilst the Jew needed a new view of Jesus, as sharing the prerogatives of the Most High. In either case a miraculous change must be wrought upon the thought and faith inherited from the past.

The true confession recognizes the worth of the sufferings borne by the Son of man; the power animating the grace and good will of Jesus; and the supreme authority of the ascended King.

(1) *The worth of the sufferings borne by the Son of man.*—The victim who bows his head upon the Cross is Lord. By his earliest teaching in this city the Apostle had shaped the course of all local controversies. His one theme had been Jesus and Him crucified. Just as the far-sighted general by a timely movement of his forces can compel the adversary to fight within certain geographical limits, so St Paul, by the reiteration of this one doctrine, fixed the exact battle-ground of the struggle between the Corinthian Church and its adversaries. It was round the Cross that the conflict was raging. On one side stands the Jew directing the finger of scorn against its victim and crying with a fanaticism which simulates inspiration, 'stricken,' 'afflicted of God,' 'forsaken!' And over against him the rapt disciple cries in grateful love, 'Wounded for our transgressions'! The only form in which the enigma of the Cross presented itself in those early days was 'Jesus anathema' or 'Jesus Lord.'

Our modern reason, however, has other ways of escape from those alternatives. Jesus may have been a martyr to His own zeal or a victim of that blind impersonal Fate which holds a restless, writhing universe in its iron grasp. Mr Beattie Crozier records a curious conversation which he once had with Thomas Carlyle. The great Scotsman, after referring to some passage in Gibbon which had given the death-blow to his own faith in Christianity, went on to say, 'As for Jesus He was a good young man disgusted with the shams and hypocrisies of His time, which His soul could not abide; and venturing with calm indifference into the lion's den of the chief priests and scribes at Jerusalem nobly met His death, as indeed such as He in all times and places have to do.' We hardly think this was Carlyle's last thought about Jesus Christ. But what of the Providence which rules in history and determines progress? The indifference of that presiding Fate, which neither shut the mouth of the lion nor made the memory of such virtue and unselfishness a storehouse of help to the after-generations, tempts us to hurl at the impassive and unpitying heavens the anathemas hurled by the old-time blasphemers against the Sufferer on the Cross. If the Supreme Power permits a succession of

Golgothas from which no harvest can arise, the Cross, far from being the symbol of hope and love, is the saddest call that has ever fallen on human ears. But a sacred and unseen messenger whispers within us that it was a God-man who was nailed to the tree, and that out of His pains a redeeming virtue arises.

Right in the face of all the folk they hoised the little tree
And thereupon the word of God for all the world to see,
'For I, I must be lifted up to draw all men to me.'

Now greater love hath no man loved than willingly to lay
Aside the life God gave him, and give himself to slay
All for the sake of another: and so did God that day.

God is glad when folk Him love, whether the saints or we,
But surely God was never so glad as when the little tree
Brought death to Him and the shadow of death, for the sake of such as we.[1]

(2) *The power animating the tenderness and goodwill of Jesus.*—If it is true that Divine virtues exalt the passion of the Cross into an atoning sacrifice, it inevitably follows that supreme power is put into His hands. The name of Jesus stood in the beginning of the evangel for a brief history of kindness, wisdom, charity, matchless friendship. In the places where St Paul laboured many of the incidents recorded in St Luke's Gospel must have been communicated to those willing to hear, for they were the common property of the Apostle and his companion. But love limited to a geographical area and acting within the span of a brief, perishable life cannot greatly help a weak and long-enduring world. Memories of goodness reverently cherished because so uncommon will not avail to bring men out of the prison-house and make them free. Does the influence of this personality persist, and persist in vital and conscious form? One who came to Jesus with a distress bitterer than death was fully persuaded of His superhuman power, but only half persuaded of His love. 'If thou wilt thou canst.' We reverse the order. 'If thou canst thou wilt.' Was this life, then, a part of the Eternal? Is Jesus Lord?

¶ Once—so runs a legend—a vessel was helplessly drifting to destruction in the heart of night upon a merciless sea. Suddenly a light appeared on the horizon, and the distressed mariners realized that they were drifting towards that light. As they came nearer, they saw that it streamed from a cross, and on it they discerned the figure of the Crucified. The captain laughed in the bitterness of his despair. 'We are starving and all but shipwrecked; what can this Man do for us? His hands are nailed fast. He is dying. He could not save Himself, let alone others.' But the ship's boy pleaded: 'Oh, no; He *could* have saved Himself. He died for love. He can surely save us.' And as the boy prayed, the vision changed. The figure of the crucified Saviour—the same, yet not the same—stood radiant, clad with triumphant power, His arms outstretched to help. The storm sank to rest, the ship made port; and the sailors knew, as they had never known before, that 'God is reigning *from the Tree*.'[1]

(3) *The supreme authority of Christ as King.*—This implies uncompromising obedience to His word. His throne must be set up within us. At the commencement of His ministry Jesus had to remind those who sat at His feet that there was an unreal use of this title, a homage that flattered the ear, 'Lord!' 'Lord!' whilst His precepts were treated with neglect and disdain. Such hollow deference cannot satisfy the heart of our King. There can be no acceptable confession of His Divine sovereignty unless we call Jesus 'Lord' in the spirit of complete ethical submission, bowing our imperfect wills to His. He accepts no homage which falls short of this. We may affirm that He is 'of one substance with the Father,' 'begotten and not made,' and be zealous for all the precision of statement found in the great Trinitarian Creeds, but unresisting obedience to His precepts, and loyalty to His calls within us must also be part of a true confession.

¶ As Dr Liddon moved among his fellowmen, he seemed as one who was often thinking of the gaze of Christ lighting on him, the Hand of Christ pointing to some act of service, the Voice

[1] A. M. Mackenzie, *The Carol of the Little Tree.*

[1] E. Herman, *The Touch of God*, 171.

of Christ prompting some witness to the Faith. There was a memorable tone that came into his words when in preaching or in argument or in conversation he spoke of that which he condemned as slighting or disloyal to Christ. It was, quite simply, like the way in which a man fires up when anyone has, even unawares, spoken rudely or contemptuously of his friend; and there are parts of his writings in which, for those at least who knew him, that same tone still sounds. It was but one sign of a real habit of thinking constantly of his Master; of a very attentive listening for His command; of an earnest, anxious desire to go straight forward in His cause, to live and die as His.[1]

2. This confession is the effect of *a supernatural movement within the heart.* 'No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but in the Holy Spirit.' The Apostles themselves did not clearly and consistently hold the Divine sovereignty of Jesus till the day of Pentecost, with its new inspirations, its enlarged outlooks, and its more stable assurance, had fully come. His wonderful works, together with the resurrection from the dead, had proved superhuman power, and had stopped at that point. Even when they beheld the cloud which received Him from their sight faith in this central truth was undefined and incomplete. It was the Pentecostal gift that freed their hearts to receive the great claims the Master had made, and it also glorified Him by making known new truths concerning His Person and power.

In the history of the Apostle Paul the method of revelation is significantly spiritual. He had seen the glory of Jesus in the midday heavens, and yet knowledge of this sacred mystery did not convey itself by the path along which such strange light travelled. 'It pleased God . . . to reveal His Son *in me*.' The witness of the other Apostles alone was insufficient for his assurance. He must go forth into the desert and listen to the voiceless persuasions of that Holy Comforter whose work it was to glorify Jesus. 'For neither received I it of men, neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.' It was here that his deep, living conviction grew and was strengthened. Intermittent glimpses of a great transfiguration beyond the clouds confirmed his faith, but the rule laid down—that the demonstration must be inward—was the rule of his own spiritual history. And the process must be repeated in each succeeding disciple who confesses that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. The true confession must arise out of an inward unveiling given to the man who puts himself under the guiding influence of the Spirit.

[1] J. O. Johnston, *Life and Letters of Henry Parry Liddon*, 403.

The Tyranny of Type

1 Cor. xii. 6.—'And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.'

THERE is a constant tendency in social life to reduce men to a common level. Conformity, says Emerson in a great essay, is the virtue most in demand in society. Society has its standard, whether low or high, and by that standard it measures everybody. Hence it is that in social life there is increasingly felt the tyranny of type. Hence it is that in advanced societies it is not easy for a man to be himself.

Now if that be true of social life, it is true also of religious life. One might almost take the words of Emerson and say, 'The virtue most in demand in *religion* is conformity.' It is the constant danger of the Church to have room only for one peculiar type. She is tempted increasingly to look askance at everything that does not conform to that. And it is when we are in danger of being overridden by this tyranny of type that we ought to remember the infinite divergences which are indicated in the text. There is one God who worketh all in all. That is the bond of union and of unity. At the back of everything, as an unfailing reservoir, is the plenitude of His power and His grace. But then, as from our earthly reservoirs there will flow water to serve a thousand purposes, so with the manifesting of the grace of God.

Let us consider this demand for uniformity as it appears in certain spheres of our religion: (1) in conversion; (2) in Christian character; (3) in Christian service.

1. *Conversion.*—In regard to conversion, the demand for conformity is best witnessed in revival times. It was so in Wesley's day, and it was so in Moody's, and it was so in the Welsh revival. Men were scarce reckoned to have come to Christ unless they could bear personal testimony to a certain definite experience. That

experience began in misery, through the convicting power of the Holy Ghost. Then it passed into agonizing prayer, and then in an instant into light and liberty. And always there was the lurking feeling that if a man knew nothing of these depths and heights, it was at least a questionable thing if he was savingly united to Christ Jesus. That feeling, in our quieter times, is perhaps less prevalent than in revival times. It may be we have gained in breadth a little, if we have lost somewhat in intensity. Yet even now, when we speak of coming to Christ, or when we use that fine old word 'conversion,' is there not a tendency to exclude everything except one recognized experience?

¶ It is pathetic to find that most saintly and devoted man, Jonathan Edwards, writing in his Diary: 'The chief thing that now makes me in any measure question my good estate is, my not having experienced conversion in those particular steps wherein the people of New England, and anciently the people of Old England, used to experience it.'

We must be on our guard against this craving for conformity in religious experience. It is not by one road that men come to Christ. There are as many roads as there are hearts. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth.' It is the chartered libertine, as Shakespeare calls it—the symbol and the sacrament of freedom. And 'so,' says the Lord Jesus Christ, 'is every one that is born of the spirit': there is the freedom of the breeze in the new birth. It took the earthquake to convert the Philippian jailor, but it took no earthquake to open Lydia's heart.

¶ There is a flower in the Tropics which is long concealed within a coarse thick covering so hard and unattractive that no one, untaught, could imagine the loveliness within. As the sun woos the hidden flower, life stirs within the thick encasement which threatens now to become its tomb, and, at last, gathering strength, bursts open the walls, sometimes with a report which may be heard yards away. Most flowers turn quietly to the sun, and are lured by its beams into beauty. There are lives which, like the flowers, open to God without any conscious effort or striving. John Masefield, however, pictures the light falling upon something tough and unyielding. At the inmost centre the soul abides, but: 'wall upon wall the gross flesh hems it in.' The light shines upon the soul of Saul Kane, and the walls are shattered for the imprisoned glory to appear. We see him unregenerate, his life a wild blasphemy; when, suddenly, a word of God enters the madness and the shame, and, in one amazing flash, he is changed. The man stands in the light—a new-born soul—rejoicing in the Everlasting Mercy.[1]

> So I may Thy Spirit know,
> Let Him as He listeth blow;
> Let the manner be unknown
> So I may with Thee be one.

2. *Christian Character.*—There is a word that St Paul is fond of using in the opening of his letters to the Churches. He addresses his converts by the name of saints—'unto the saints which are in Ephesus.' Now notice this, Paul was not writing to a few. He was writing to every one who was in Christ. He was not selecting a few outstanding Christians when he wrote 'unto the saints which are in Ephesus.' He was thinking of the master and the slave—of the mother—of the soldier in the guard-room; and what varieties of character were there it does not take much genius to discover. Unto the saints which were in Ephesus—and one of them would be a strong, stern man, and one would be a shy and shrinking girl, and one a poet with his heart of music, and one would be a blundering agitator interfering with everybody's business, and one would be a dreamer of sweet dreams. Unto the saints which are in Ephesus—the point is that *all* of them were saints. There was room in the word, in its grand Pauline usage, for every variety of man in Christ. Cromwell, in that grim way of his, called his choicest regiment 'the saints.' They were not childlike: they were grizzled veterans whose ears were ringing with the clash of steel. Saints? It sounds absurd to call them saints; and yet Cromwell had the right of it; he knew that for the battered soldier there was sainthood as well as for the sweet and gentle soul. In the eyes of Christ there is no favoured or peculiar type, for there are diversities of operations.

Of course there is a certain general likeness between all who are in Jesus Christ. Just as men engaged in perilous callings are moulded

[1] T. H. Davies, *Spiritual Voices in Modern Literature*, 294.

broadly into a common likeness, so that the miner has his peculiar stamp, and the fisherman his bearing unmistakable, so in the perilous calling of the Christian there are powers as of the mighty deep at work which silently impress a common likeness. A true Christian, whatever be his temperament, will always differ from a true Muhammadan. An ardent Buddhist could never be mistaken for an ardent follower of Jesus Christ. But the wonderful thing about that common life in which all share who are in Jesus is that it comes not to repress but to intensify the individuality.

¶ One of the sweetest Scottish poetesses is Lady Nairne. It is she who has given us *The Land o' the Leal.* When she was young, she was a very gay young woman, but the hour struck when she was led to Christ. A weaker woman would have written hymns then, and the hymns might have been very beautiful, but Lady Nairne was never a weak woman, and she continued writing songs. She knew that there are diversities of operations. She knew that *The Rowan Tree* could tell for Christ as surely as 'O Love that wilt not let me go.' And so, not without that richer music which comes when the windows are opened to the east, she abode in the calling wherein she was called.[1]

¶ The set of Dresden, or Worcester, or Satsuma which is most valued is that in which every piece bears a separate design, though common touches of colour unite them into one. The separate designs represent so much more of the artist's thought and time and love.[2]

We see this diversity clearly in the case of the first disciples of our Lord. One might have thought that a fellowship like Christ's would have had a certain repressing influence. It was so overpowering, that fellowship, it was so penetrative and commanding. But the strange thing is that so far from doing that, somehow it touched the strings of personality, and every man of them became himself when he became a follower of Jesus. Peter never grew like John. John was never the replica of Peter. Thomas—we should have known him anywhere, he was so gloomy and so doubting and so loyal. Each of them was empowered to become—not what his neighbour nor what his brother was but—what he was himself in God's eyes, according to the pattern in the mount.

[1] G. H. Morrison, *The Afterglow of God*, 161.
[2] T. G. Selby, *The Lesson of a Dilemma*, 355.

3. *Christian Service.*—One of the most familiar scenes in Scripture is the fight of David and Goliath. And perhaps the choicest moment of that scene is when David is getting ready for the fight. We see Saul lending him his armour, and it was a very honouring bestowal. We see David, restless and uneasy, handling the great sword as if he feared it. And then we see him laying all aside, and crying out, 'I cannot go in these,' and fingering his well-loved sling again. For Saul there was but one way of fighting. He had never dreamed of any other way. There was only one tradition in his chivalry, and every fighter must conform to that. But David, fresh from the uplands, and the morning, and the whispering of God among the hills, must have liberty to fight in his own way. The one was all for immemorial custom. The other was determined to be free. The one said, 'It has been always so,' and the other, 'I cannot go in these.' And remember that it was not Saul who was in the line of God's election, but that young stripling from the Bethlehem pasturage who in his service dared to be himself.

In our thought of Christian service we need to be reminded of that scene. We must guard against narrowing our thought of service into half a dozen recognized activities. When Christ was on earth the twelve disciples served Him, and it was a noble and a glorious service. But have we exhausted the catalogue of services when we have named their preaching and their teaching? The woman who washed His feet was also serving, and Martha when she made the supper ready, and the mother who caught up her little child and brought it to Him that it might be blessed. There are hands which can wield no sword, but which can carry a cup of water beautifully.

The Holy Spirit

1 Cor. xii. 7.—'The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.'

When the outpouring of the Spirit was given at Pentecost there were transient elements in it, but in essence it was permanent. The rushing mighty wind and the cloven tongues of fire and the strange speech in many languages were all equally transient. But that which these things symbolized is permanent. And if churches and individuals have not the gift of the Spirit

it is not because it has not been bestowed, but because it has not been accepted. God's Holy Spirit is not confined to select individuals or to exceptional attainments, but is the heritage of the whole Christian Church. 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost?' Wherever there is faith, there the Spirit of God is bestowed, and bestowed in the measure in which faith is exercised.

The question is sometimes asked, Did a new power come into the world at Pentecost? Was not the Spirit at work before the coming of Christ, teaching and inspiring men? Certainly the Spirit was acting before Christ came. He inspired the writers of the Old Testament. He gave to heathen poets and philosophers whatever noble thoughts they had. Everywhere He was touching the hearts and consciences of men. But He was able to work with much more power after Christ came, because, as it were, He had more material to work with. He had the fact of Christ to interpret and all its richness to explain and bring home to the world. You could teach botany out of books to some one in a desert where there were no flowers and your pupil would learn much. But he would learn more, and would grasp the truth much more vividly, if you could show him the actual flower living and growing. You would as a teacher have much more material at hand for the instruction of your pupil. You would have the living rose instead of the diagram of the rose in the text-book. You would see the bud unfolding before you, instead of seeing a series of pictures on a printed page. In something of the same manner God could make His education of men much more real and effective when Christ had come in the flesh, had lived and died and risen and ascended. He could fill men with fresh energies just because all that God meant had been made living and concrete when Jesus moved among the crowds in Palestine, and showed them the true significance of the Divine Love.

1. The Spirit, then, is the living Interpreter of Jesus. His work is continuous, and is going on now. Let us see what this implies.

(1) It implies, first of all, that God is in active communication with the world which He has made. God is not distant, away in some remote heaven, but is near at hand. His Spirit is ever educating men, leading them on into new truth, inspiring, controlling, working in human hearts. A living God, near at hand—that is the God of Christianity. Yet how many there are who virtually worship a dead God! They think of God as remote. They wonder if on His distant throne He hears their prayers. They never seem to grasp what is meant by a God 'in whom we live, and move, and have our being.' And so their religion is a lifeless thing, which brings no stirring of the blood, no glad enthusiasms, no sense of a Divine Presence all about them. They have never understood this doctrine of the Holy Spirit, or seen the richness of it. They have to lay again the foundation of their faith, and to come face to face with this central truth of a Living God near at hand and working continually in the hearts of men. Then fresh life will come to their beliefs, and their religion will become something very different from what it was before, not a matter of dead dogmas and forms and ceremonies, but the communion of their spirits with the Spirit of God.

For not in far-off realms of space
The Spirit hath its throne;
In every heart it findeth place
And waiteth to be known.

Thought answereth alone to thought,
And Soul with soul hath kin;
The outward God he findeth not,
Who finds not God within.

But if the vision come to thee
Revealed by inward sign,
Earth will be full of Deity
And with His glory shine.[1]

(2) But the doctrine of the Holy Spirit means more than this. For, as we have seen, the special work of the Spirit is to be the Interpreter of Christ. Christ is a Person, and we never learn to know a person in the same way in which we learn a fact about past history. To know a person you must enter into his mind; you must share his interests; you must have sympathy with him. Between you there must be common aims, common standards of feeling and thought. All this needs effort, and requires time. Acquaintanceship is one thing; true friendship is another. And acquaintanceship with Christ is not enough. Now the work of

[1] F. L. Hosmer.

the Holy Spirit is to turn acquaintanceship with Christ into a real, living friendship. The Spirit, if we will let Him do so, can place Christ and ourselves in close living union, so that Christ becomes for us no more a mere external historical Figure, but a present Companion whose interests and purposes we share.

2. Why do we need such an Interpreter? Christ makes the demand, as He stands over our lives, that we shall live by His standards. What are His standards? *Holiness* and *service.* Christ calls on us to be holy, and to lose our lives in the service of God and humanity. His was the sinless life of service for others, and He came to show men the kind of life which God wished them to lead. His work is a work of redemption, the very purpose of which is to lift our lives out of the sin and selfishness which drag them down, up to a new level of goodness. Who is there who does not know the power of sin? Who is there who does not feel the need of some greater aid to enable him to overcome the temptations which beset him? Could we hope to make Christ our example unless we had a supply of Divine strength on which to draw? The Spirit is given us just in order that it may be possible for us to make Christ's standards our own. He is the Spirit of holiness, and holiness is our chief need. To those who will admit Him into their hearts the Spirit reveals the beauty of Christ's life and character, and inspires them to desire to be like Him.

¶ The artist who paints a picture, or chisels a statue, impresses a certain amount of his own genius on flat canvas or cold marble. It is not a beauty developed from within, working outward; but something put upon the passive canvas or marble, by an outside process that never goes beneath the surface, never imparts life within. But the artist power of the Holy Ghost is seen in that, taking up His abode in the heart, He renews and sanctifies that heart, and the outward life is but the development of the inward grace.[1]

¶ What John Ruskin said of the contrast between two pictures describes the contrast between lives which were filled by the Spirit and those which were not. The one picture is 'all effort,' the other is 'all power.' Before the days of David Cox, Ruskin tells us, artists used to paint trees that resemble those palms which Nuremburg toy-makers send out for children's Noah's Arks—squat, stumpy caricatures of palms. After Cox's day artists put wind in their trees. There is life, movement, grace in trees with tossing branches and upturned leaves. So there is a grace and life and movement and impulse about the Christian who is filled with the Holy Spirit.[1]

We cannot prove the things of the Spirit as we can prove a scientific truth by demonstration in the laboratory. But we have to find some explanation of the continuous and persistent testimony of the Christian Church. We cannot see the wind, but we can see its effects—the moving branches, the whirling leaves. And we can see the effects of the Spirit in converted lives—in the drunkard made sober, in the self-sacrifice of the worker in the slum, in all the splendid heroism of the mission field; nay, in our own lives, in those hours when we were enabled to conquer temptation through a power not our own. We need no more proof. We have the very best proof possible, the proof of life, of facts, of results achieved. This Divine Interpreter of Christ exists. God is in living touch with the souls of men. There exists this great reservoir of power on which we may draw. This is the truth which stands at the heart of our religion, and makes it a religion of life and power, a growing, conquering religion, which has within it the very energy of God Himself.[2]

[1] W. B. Stevens.

The Teaching of the Organ

For Young People

1 Cor. xii. 18.—'Now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.'

Inside it is a world of pipes. Great shining pipes that stand in front like grave angels of praise; great black wooden pipes with the complexions of coal-heavers. Pipes that everybody sees; pipes that nobody sees. Tiny pipes that peep like birds; gruff pipes that grumble like thunder. Fat pipes, slender pipes, crooked pipes, open pipes, stopped pipes; and a whole army of pipes that are to play all their life shut up in a dark box, never seeing the people whom they are helping to praise.

And they are all needed. Each has its place

[1] A. M. Sutherland, *The Greatest Need of the Modern Church*, 27.

[2] V. F. Storr, *What it Means to be a Christian*, 21.

set for it, and each has its note which the builder counts on hearing—the great pipes sixteen feet long and the tiny pipes that are not an inch long.

Now this is a sort of dream about an organ. It was all finished, and after the first recital it seemed as if all the pipes were speaking, and with angry voices. The metal pipes were looking down on the wooden pipes because they were 'only wood'! The swell pipes were sneering at the pedal pipes. 'The organist thinks more of us,' they said, 'for he takes off his gloves to play us, and he plays you with his feet, and doesn't even take his boots off!' The pedals were silent, not knowing what to say; but one, the Bourdon, a French gentleman, grunted out 'Ferme ta boîte.' This means 'shut your box,' and is rude French for 'hold your tongue'; but it fitted the swell pipes, for they lived in a box, you see. Next, the Voix Celeste, which means 'heavenly voice,' began, in a most unheavenly voice, to grumble because she had had only a little piece to sing by herself, and she had felt 'in such good voice too!' Then the Bourdon offered a remark to the open Diapason, who looked down on him from his sixteen feet of height and said he kept no company with eight-foot pipes. They were beneath him; 'and besides,' he said, 'it is evident nobody wants to hear you much, for the builder has rammed a great wooden plug into your throat to keep you quiet.' And then such a plaintive voice spoke. It was the Piccolo. It was disheartened because it was so little. What was the good of it singing at all when all those great pipes were bellowing at the same time? 'Nobody heard me,' it said, 'so next time the message came to me, I just didn't speak at all, so there!'

And all the while the people were saying how they had liked the little piece on the Voix Celeste, and the organist was praising the organ, and saying that the only flaw was that one note of the Piccolo did not speak. While, if the Bourdon had only known, that plug that so stuck in his throat was put there to give him as deep a note as if he had been sixteen feet; and all the time he would have liked to get rid of it, and was 'taking thought' to add to his stature!

Is this world of pipes not very like our world of people? Here there are brilliant lives and homely ones. Lives 'seen of men,' hidden lives, great lives, little lives, and lives with sad deformities and hindrances which they find hard to understand. But God has a place for each and knows each voice, and His praise is not perfect unless every voice sounds when it is called upon.

Suppose you think of your whole life as an organ of many pipes, there are two things that must be, if your life is to give the right music. Let the organ be ever so well made, it can do nothing till the wind is flooding every part of it. Then each pipe is ready to speak at once when the key is pressed. Now, let our lives be ever so beautiful, there cannot be music unless the mighty breath of God's Holy Spirit is all through them, and so the Bible says to us, 'Be filled with the Spirit.'

The other thing is this, some one must press the keys. Now who is to press the keys of your life? Its keys are gladness, sorrow, thankfulness, disappointment, loss, gain, pain, pleasure, love, work, death; and there is only One who knows how to touch these so that there shall come pure and sweet and strong music. It must be Jesus.[1]

Fellowship

1 Cor. xii. 20.—'Many members, yet but one body.'

Every one has heard of the *camaraderie* of the trenches. The men and boys facing the same dangers, sustaining the same labours, suffering the same discomforts, eating and grumbling at the same rations, praising or abusing the same officers, singing the same songs and laughing at the same jokes, were linked up together by the bond of association to a degree that was utterly unprecedented. They made the great discovery—the discovery of fellowship. They found out by experience that fellowship is a great thing, a quite invaluable thing. They even made it the basis of their army-code of morality. To stick to your comrades and to play the game was the great commandment for the soldier; while to go back upon your mate, to let him down in his hour of weakness or of difficulty, was the one transgression that met with universal reprobation.

¶ In a volume of collected papers on the War, Pierre Loti, describing a visit which he made to the city of Soissons, said: 'In trenches, communication trenches, little dark labyrinths, little

[1] S. Robertson, *The Rope of Hair*, 92.

tunnels where men suffer and sacrifice themselves, there will be found established our best and purest school of socialism. And by this term "socialism," a term too often profaned, I mean true socialism, be it understood, which is synonymous with tolerance and brotherhood, that socialism, in a word, which Christ came to teach us in that clear formula, which in its adorable simplicity sums up all formulas, "Love one another." '

It can hardly be denied that in the course of the last few years there has been a real and perceptible change in the social tone and atmosphere of our daily life. We are tending more and more to draw near to one another, to tolerate one another. We are turning with new longing towards the ideal of social harmony and reciprocity and solidarity that is so aptly summarized in the maxim, 'In essential things unity, in doubtful things liberty, and in all things charity.'

Now this movement towards fellowship is emphatically a Christian movement. Whether we are conscious of it or not, all our progress in this direction is along lines that were laid down centuries ago by Jesus Christ. There are, in fact, no other lines. All the theory and practice of fellowship is found already in the gospel. What, indeed, is Christianity, from the ethical point of view, but fellowship in action —practical helpfulness, realized brotherhood, exercised love? What is the Christian doctrine of morality? There are many precepts, many injunctions, scattered broadcast through the New Testament, but all may be comprehended in one small monosyllable—Love!

Very feebly and imperfectly we are trying to return to the method of our Lord and His Apostles. We are beginning at last to understand what Christ has told us all along—that there is only one means of stilling the strifes and assuaging the sufferings of men and nations, and that is the diffusion of the Christian spirit of brotherhood. The secret of peace and prosperity and progress was unmistakably revealed to us: but we sought to gain the wished-for end by our own inventions and expedients! We thought that commerce would serve as a substitute for Christian charity. And what has been the result? 'Commerce,' as we might have learned from Adam Smith—'commerce, which ought naturally to be among nations as among individuals a bond of union and friendship, has become the most fertile source of discord and animosity.' We trusted, again, in the unifying power of cosmopolitan culture and literature. But that too, failed. If order and beauty and peace are to be reinstated in the world, we must begin again at the beginning and take the Christian way of fellowship—that fellowship which ought naturally to flourish among those who recognize that they are brethren, all the children of one Father, all redeemed by one Redeemer, all sanctified by one Spirit, all members of one body, and all bound by one great commandment to help one another and to practise love.

Fellowship, then, is a necessity. We cannot get on without it. We want to see better and more rational standards of living. We want to see less poverty on the one hand, and less luxury on the other. We want to see a purer morality, a more generous charity, a more passionate zeal for righteousness diffused throughout the community. And how can we hope to realize these aspirations? Only by means of a fellowship strong in faith and strong in works. Only by the cultivation of a common 'will to co-operation.' Men and women must meet together in little companies and societies to consider these urgent problems; and must carry out the results of their joint deliberation in fellowship with one another and in fellowship with all the other similar societies that are labouring in different ways for the same great ends.

And just as fellowship is needed for the secular business of the world, so is it needed in religion. One defect of the Christian Church to-day is absence of corporate spirit. There are many churches, but not one Church. Now so long as a spirit of religious exclusiveness prevails, so long as each congregation or corporation or denomination assumes that it alone has the right of *entrée* to God's spacious paradise, then we are making the great mistake and are marching to the doom of inefficiency. And the only infallible remedy for such deplorable arrogance and intolerance is more fellowship. 'It is impossible,' says Dr Thomas Allin, 'not to recognize, if not formally, yet indirectly, as fellow Churchmen all in whose life the Spirit of Christ is working.' What we need is more Christian charity—not the false charity which consists in 'thinking of all the people who disagree with us, and asking that they may be

brought to a better frame of mind,' but the true charity which brings men together, in spite of many superficial differences, on the common ground of allegiance to a common Lord and Saviour.

> We faintly hear, we dimly see,
> In differing phrase we pray;
> But dim or clear, we own in Thee
> The Light, the Truth, the Way.

It is only so that religion can become what it is meant to be and ought to be—a great power, a conquering force. A recent writer says: 'Religion has stood to me always as a split camp, something which might conquer, but spends its strength owing to the antagonism of the churches. We have talked of German militarism, the Yellow Peril, the steady upcreep of socialism, and regarded them as forces—things to be considered, directed, exterminated or utilized as necessity required. But consider religion—its powers and possibilities. Bind your myriad churches together—the churches that follow a common God, but study rather their differences than their knowledge of Him. Put up a common standard, link up section belief. That is my doctrine . . . If the world would only believe and unite its faith! Think what Napoleon did with a mob that believed in him; and united belief in God could do more.'

Since this fellowship-movement is so necessary, both in the business of the world and in the life of religion, how may we as individuals contribute to its promotion?

1. Let us seek occasions of coming into contact, and making friends, with other people, ignoring caste and party, and remembering only brotherhood. That first. Without personal contact there can obviously be no fellowship. But when once men begin to associate with one another and to know one another better they discover each other's good points, and sentiments of sympathy and mutual esteem are generated. 'I hate that man,' Charles Lamb once exclaimed to a friend. 'Do you know him?' asked the friend. And Lamb replied, 'Of course not: if I did, I could not hate him.' Yes, great is the power of contact, of personal association. Not only does it bring good men of every section and school together; it can even reclaim bad men and join them to the society of the good.

¶ Victor Hugo tells how a desperate man was saved through being welcomed with gentle and beautiful consideration by a saintly bishop. He had been released from the galleys and turned loose upon the world; and he found that not a soul would have anything at all to do with him. Landlords refused him lodging. Ordinary householders refused him food. The hand of every man was against him. At last he went to the bishop's house. 'Look here,' he said, 'my name is Jean Valjean. I am a galley-slave, and I have spent nineteen years in prison. Here is my passport. I have tried everywhere, and no one will take me in. I am dead tired and frightfully hungry; will you let me stay here?' And the bishop, to the consternation of his domestics, answered: 'You are welcome. You need not have told me who you are. This is not my house, but Christ's. This door does not ask the visitor who enters if he has a name, but whether he has sorrow. You are suffering, so be welcome! And why should I want to know your name? I knew it before you told me—you are my brother.'

2. Let us fix our attention steadily on what is best in other people, especially in those whom we dislike or with whom we disagree. No doubt they have any number of defects—but why should we constantly look for them and hunt them out? Dwell rather on what is amiable and admirable in their character. Let us exercise more charity in our criticisms and judgments. There is no possibility of fellowship so long as men cultivate in their estimates of others the critical, satirical, censorious, suspicious temper—the temper of Job's Satan, 'Doth Job serve God for nought?' the temper of Goethe's Mephistopheles, 'Every man his price'; the disposition to say, whenever some one does something wrong, 'Of course; what else did you expect?' or whenever some one does something right, 'Now I wonder what he is going to get out of it.' What chance can there be for fellowship in such an atmosphere? If we honestly desire to live in fellowship we must steadily fix our attention, not on what is evil or disagreeable or discreditable, but on what is lovable and good in others. And if we can discern no good, then we may take it as pretty certain that there is something rather seriously amiss with us ourselves. Do you know what was said of Richelieu? 'Profound

self-knowledge made him uncharitable. He found so little good in himself, that he credited others with as little.'

3. Let us lend a helping hand to others, whenever we have opportunity.

¶ Matthew Arnold, in his *Rugby Chapel*, pictures a band of pilgrims fighting their way over Alpine heights. A few succeed in struggling through innumerable perils to the wayside mountain inn; and as the host receives them, he asks, 'Where are the others? Whom have you left in the snow?' Sadly they answer, 'We bring only ourselves—we lost the rest in the storm!' Then the poet goes on—

> But thou would'st not *alone*
> Be saved, my father! *alone*
> Conquer and come to thy goal,
> Leaving the rest in the wild.
> We were weary, and we
> Fearful, and we in our march
> Fain to drop down and to die.
> Still thou turnedst, and still
> Beckonedst the trembler, and still
> Gavest the weary thy hand.

The man who is really animated by the genuine spirit of brotherhood is determined to save others as well as himself—thinks for others, feels for others, works for others, prays for others, puts forth his energies for the benefit of others, suffers inconveniences and makes sacrifices for others. That is the kind of spirit that diffuses and propagates brotherhood. Readiness to help, readiness to serve, whether in little things or in great things, readiness on occasion to take the basin and wear the towel and wash the brethren's feet—that is the final, indispensable condition of the furtherance of Christian fellowship.

'The nineteenth century made the world into a neighbourhood; the twentieth century will make it into a brotherhood.' Are we moving towards the realization of that prophecy—seeking to bind up all far-sundered, disassociated men and nations into the unity of the one body—the humanitarian body of Christ? For that end let us labour more earnestly in the future. And whereas of ourselves we are incapable of achieving that ideal fellowship we will humbly supplicate God, who Himself is Perfect Love, to send His Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love which is the very bond of peace.

> Wherever in the world I am,
> In whatsoe'er estate,
> I have a fellowship with hearts
> To keep and cultivate,
> And a work of lowly love to do,
> For the Lord on whom I wait.

Church Membership

1 Cor. xii. 21.—'And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.'

Professor Harnack has pointed out that 'the two great characteristics of the early Christians were brotherly love and an enthusiasm of gladness in which these Christians lived, that unique thing in the world which convinced the world of the reality of Christ's grace.' It is that love, the fact of a Church united in love, which will conquer scepticism and convince the world again. Isolated Christians may show other virtues—purity, integrity, courage—but for love there must be more than one. Outside, the love of benevolence and kindness can be shown, only within the Church can we show love of the brethren. Some claim that they join no Church because their love is so pure they love all alike. We should not value such love in our homes. What we need to-day is a Church full of love, showing what a society can become in Christ. And in our text we have St Paul's principles laid down, upon which is founded the duty of membership in the Church of Christ.

1. Let us, therefore, first notice that membership in the visible Church is *necessary for the development of the spiritual life*. St Paul in this passage has likened the Christian life to membership in a body. In a body there are many members, and each member has his own office. In other words, each Christian has his own gift which he holds for the benefit of the whole Church, and his own limitation on account of which he needs the help of the gift of some other Christian. Many have never grasped this truth. But, as Dr Dale has said, 'Nothing can be clearer than that isolation is not the law of the religious life.' We need the help of other believers for a full and deep Christian life.

¶ On the flyleaf of the Bible of one of the greatest Christian leaders of our time there was written, after a quiet conference to which he had gone away for a day or two with a group of fellow-ministers, 'Committed myself again with Christian brethren to unreserved docility and devotion before my Master.' There is a kind of devotion to the cause of Jesus Christ and to that whole interpretation of life which He incarnates that is not easily attained by a man in loneliness, but only through that contagious desire which comes to him in the midst of his brethren.[1]

All are needed by each one;
Nothing is fair or good alone.[2]

Let us study our principle in the life of those corporate sections of the Church which make up the whole Visible Church of Christ. Each of these sections of the Church has its own special gift, which it holds in a degree not possessed by the rest for the benefit of the whole. Take, for example, the United Free Church of Scotland. That Church has always been characterized by her theological learning, and to-day her theologians are exerting a greater influence than perhaps any others on the pulpits of the country. Take the Anglican Church. She has a profound reverence for the past, an instinct for historical Christianity, and a genius for creating beautiful and reverent services. It is a great gift, and she holds it for the benefit of the whole Church of God. And the thought and worship of all Churches is being influenced by her teaching and example. Methodism, too, has her own gift. She was born in a great attempt to reach the non-church-going masses of our land, and that gift for evangelism she holds still in a degree possessed by none other. And these gifts each Church possesses to inspire and guide others not so gifted in that particular direction. The sin of schism is a very real sin and has a very real punishment. If any section of Christ's disciples refuses to recognize any other section as a true part of the body of Christ, it has sinned the sin of schism—and it will be punished by the loss of those lessons that that section can teach.

This principle works also in the life of individuals. Each Christian has his own gift and his own limitation. Some are optimists, and others have the spirit of caution; some are learned, others unlearned; and each requires the help of the other. There are difficult passages of Scripture which the unlearned cannot interpret. God does not send miraculous revelations of their meaning. He uses the gifts of the learned. God's method is to bless men not directly, but through some other fellow-servant of their Lord. When Christ appeared to Saul on his way to Damascus He did not complete the revelation of His will. Christ said to him, 'Arise and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do.' Then a vision came to 'a certain disciple named Ananias,' and Ananias was sent to Saul that he might both receive his sight and 'be filled with the Holy Ghost.' Christ sends His blessing to one man through another. And why? For one reason, because his Kingdom is a kingdom of love; and we love those whom we help, and those who help us, and so are bound together in the bonds of mutual helpfulness. 'There is a true Church wherever one hand meets another helpfully, and that is the only holy or Mother Church which ever was, or ever shall be.'[1] The inevitable result of the Christian life within our hearts is that we seek such fellowship with our fellow-Christians. 'If we walk in the light as he is in the light,' then as an inevitable consequence 'we have fellowship one with another.' 'We know that we have passed from death into life because we love the brethren.' It was for fellowship that the martyrs of the Christian Church laid down their lives.

¶ 'The martyrs of the primitive churches of old lost more of their blood and lives for their meetings and assemblies than for personal profession of the faith, and so also have others done under the Roman apostasy. It is a usual plea amongst those who engage in the persecution or punishment of such as differ from them that, if they pleased, they might keep their opinions, their consciences and faith unto themselves, without meetings for communion or public worship. And herein they suppose they deal friendly and gently with them. And this is our present case. But we like it not. We cannot purchase outward peace and quietness at any such rate. But, as was said, the inward instinct of believers, from the same principles of faith, love, and all the graces of the Spirit in

[1] W. R. Bowie, *The Inescapable Christ*, 168.
[2] Emerson.

[1] Ruskin.

them all, doth efficaciously lead and incline them unto their joint exercise in societies, unto the glory of Christ and their own edification, or increase of the same graces in them.' [1]

The saints of the great days of the faith laid down their lives for the fellowship some hold so lightly to-day. Most of us have a quite inadequate idea of the power of such fellowship to help men to be true to Christ. But the missionaries know. Amongst a degraded population it is so easy to be better than the best that, almost unconsciously, there is a tendency to become careless and indifferent. And in the first age of the faith, when the Christian Church was a small island of light in an ocean of corruption and darkness, exclusion from its fellowship must have meant practically moral and spiritual death. But to-day, when the world is leavened with high moral ideals, our peril is more subtle, but there must be as real, though not so conspicuous, a spiritual loss.

2. Membership in the visible Church of Christ is *useful for the discipline of the spiritual life.* Loyal membership in a church is not always easy—pride and wilfulness make it difficult. In a corporate body one member cannot have his own way in everything; the church is certain at some time to take a course with which he cannot agree. And such an experience is good for the correction of that wilfulness and pride. Now religion is the strongest stimulant which can be applied to human nature, and it brings out the best or the worst in men. There is a type of religious mind—self-assertive, fanciful, uncharitable, self-satisfied—which brings religion into disrepute, and earns the scorn of the sceptic. Loyal membership in a visible Church is irksome to such a mind; but it is the discipline of that membership it needs, and the discipline would go far to cure its faults. The reason men give for leaving churches is often the very reason they should remain in them.

The duty of submitting to such discipline and sacrifice is not sufficiently recognized. Take the burning question of the relationship of the Church to social and national questions. There are those who demand that such questions shall not be introduced into the pulpit. Their views are not the views uttered from the pulpit. They threaten to leave the Church if their demand is not conceded. Concession to their desire seems to them simple and just. But it is not so simple. The Old Testament prophet dealt with such questions; and there are Christians who feel that it would be disloyalty to Christ to be silent. Such questions are said to be political questions, but they feel that if, in pursuit of Christ's enemies, they cross the sphere of politics, they no more become political than an English army, in pursuit of the King's enemies, become Spaniards because they pass through Spain.

¶ On the occasion of a mission to Central London, Silvester Horne addressed a large gathering in the Oxford Music Hall. 'A few days later,' he says, 'one of our weekly papers for the man about town had a long and sympathetic description of this meeting. But I remember one sentence in which the writer took the view that I must have known the point in my address at which religion passed into politics. He confessed that the address was founded on religious principles; and that it dealt with no phase of politics that could be described as "party." But it was openly and frankly political; and I must have known where lay the mystic frontier between the two kingdoms. Alas! I cannot enlighten my friendly critic; for in all honesty I do not know. Neither could another tell you who has, nevertheless, a right to be heard. He had been a detective; and one of his old pals came to see us shortly afterwards, to find out what on earth could have revolutionized a man like "so and so." The ex-detective was in the Oxford Music Hall that afternoon; and from that hour dates his transfiguration. When, only the other day, he was brought to death's door and had to endure a terrible operation, he said, "Tell Mr Horne, five years ago I could not have gone through it." Neither physically nor morally could he have faced it, before that experience in the Music Hall.' [1]

It is said that all questions on which members conscientiously differ ought to be excluded from the Church, but that would reduce the Church to a nullity. There are many questions of life, of ritual, of method, of points in theology upon which those differ who yet agree on the vital principles of the faith. What is a serious point of conscience to one seems absurd to another. But to agree to take no action in all such questions would reduce the Church to inactivity and ruin. What is to be done? We must agree to

[1] John Owen.

[1] C. Silvester Horne, *Pulpit, Platform, and Parliament*, 101.

differ and let the ordinary method of decision show which course the Church shall follow. 'In greater things unity, in lesser things charity.'

3. Membership in the visible Church is *necessary for the evangelization of the world.* There is a tendency in the Christian Church, increasing at the present moment, to leave the evangelization of the world to the ordained ministers. The most generous financial support is shown. But the minister, however gifted, cannot say to the layman, 'I have no need of you.' It is not by brilliant individual combat that men are going to be captured for Christ. 'Like a mighty army moves the Church of God.' What we want to-day is a revival of the Church—a recognition of the duty of, and a joy in, fellowship. We want a Church full of love—love not to those who share our tastes, but to men for the bare fact that they are Christians—love that is impossible save by the grace of Him to whom it witnesses. We want unity—we want love. And when we have that love the world will be conquered.

The Body of Christ

1 Cor. xii. 27.—'Ye are the body of Christ.'

THE ideal conception of the Church, as stated by St Paul, is that it is the Body of Christ. Let us try to grasp this thought of the Apostle in some of its many bearings in this world.

1. The Church consists of those who are animated by the Spirit of Christ. There are some in our churches who are not in the Church of Christ; there are some who are not in those churches who are in the Church of Christ. All who love Christ in sincerity and truth, in whatever land or clime, are the body of Christ. You will notice then at once how this thought of Paul lifts us in our religious thinking out of the littleness of individual salvation, and makes us sacred in our very being and calling, uniting us with all those who are His, and showing us how close, how vital, is our connection with Himself.

¶ John Wesley had been arguing with some people during the daytime about sects, and his thoughts took this form at night: he fancied that he found himself at the gate of heaven, and he said to the angel, 'Tell me, have you any Church of England people in heaven?' 'Not one,' said the angel. 'Have you any Roman Catholics in heaven?' 'Not one.' 'Have you any members of the Greek Church in heaven?' 'Not one.' 'Have you any Presbyterians in heaven?' 'Not a single one.' 'Well, may I ask have you any Wesleyans in heaven?' 'Not a single one.' 'Whom have you in heaven?' said John Wesley. 'Only those who love God, that is the only name we have up here, only those who love God.' And so we too may see that love of God is the only essential test of true Christianity and true churchmanship.[1]

All who speak truth to me commissioned are;
All who love God are in my church embraced.
Not that I have no sense of preference,
None deeper, but I rather love to draw,
Even here on earth, on toward that perfect law,
And Heaven's fine etiquette, where Who and Whence
May not be asked, but at the Wedding Feast
North may sit down with South, and West with East.

What, then, is the body? It is made up of a number of members; but for our purpose and from the modern scientific point of view we may say it is made up of countless particles of 'matter,' though the word is passing out of use. It is made up of countless particles of matter, in all kinds and states of existence; but these do not make a body. A scientist might lay all those materials on his dissecting table, and they would not then form a body. They are a body when they are taken by a higher unseen power and woven together, not in a moment, but through long processes and long years, woven together into a unity, made subservient and useful to the master-power that wove them so.

What we see, then, is that a body consists not of so much stuff, but of a unity which has been woven into a unity, and which is continually kept a unity, mastered, made, remade, and governed by the life, the mind, the man within. You are 'you' through all your life, but that body of yours has no particle in it which was in it a few years ago. Nevertheless the body of to-day is as surely your body as

[1] G. C. Grubb, *The Light of His Countenance*, 21.

the body of years ago. What it is made of does not matter in the least. It is your body, and it answers, according to the healthfulness of your being, to the direction of your will. It is in such close connection with you that not only does it answer to your will, but you are woven together, body and mind, so closely that the pain that seems to be in your body is your own personal sensation.

Now, Christ's body is His Church, and His body consists of a host that no man can number; and the Christians of this earth, rightly regarded, are not so many separate Christians; they are one body. They are being woven into one body by the indwelling Christ. Paul's thought is that as you dwell in your body, and by so dwelling make the body you dwell in, so Christ lives within us, the indwelling spirit, mind, and will. Just as you have called from all sides of existence that which has now been woven into your body, so Christ has passed through the centuries and has drawn to Himself those that are His.

When Jesus was on earth, He refused to live in any other manner than the manner of men. In Galilee He had need of a body in order to do His work. The most brilliant thought is ineffective unless you can put it into effect through a body. An architect may plan a cathedral, perfect to the last minaret, but his thought has to go through his own and countless bodies before it can be a fact among men. Christ may have the highest ideas for the redemption of this world; He had them in Galilee, but all He did in Galilee was done through His body; and it is still true that Christ can work out His will of salvation in this world only through His body.

Here we see at once, and with awful clearness, the need there is for His Church to realize that she is His body, that He is dependent upon her for the fulfilment of His will. You are not your own, and by no little efforts merely your own can you accomplish your own true work; our wisdom is to remember that life's duty is to surrender ourselves to the Christ who lives within us, that He may work through us.

Your hand is extremely useful as long as it responds to your will. Cut it off, let it be paralysed, and you cannot make any use of it. And when there is paralysis of sin, of disobedience, of laziness, of selfishness, in you, Christ's arm is paralysed in some crisis or need. You wonder that the salvation of this world so long tarries? Here is its explanation. You arise some morning, and the day has come when you should have entered upon some long-expected and prepared-for work; but your head is sick with fever, and you are helpless. You may desire what you will, but you are helpless; and Christ is often helpless. He is tied and bound by the faults of His members. If they are dumb, He is dumb. There are no other hands by which He can bless except their hands; no other feet on which He can pass on His journeys of love.

¶ Mrs Ellis was the wife of a missionary on the frontier of India. Her husband, after a short time of work, was killed for converting a Muhammadan Afghan and the convert himself was stoned to death by his tribe. Still she worked on upon the wild Afghan frontier, and she repeated what was evidently the inspiration of her life. 'Nothing matters except the witness.' She was only one woman on the wild frontier, but forty thousand patients carry back to their country the magic of her touch.

> Take my hands, and let them move
> At the impulse of Thy love.
> Take my feet, and let them be
> Swift and beautiful for Thee.

2. St Paul teaches also that Christ's body grows. It is being built up, and it shall go on to be built up until it reaches its perfectness. He tells us that all ministries and service, that all work and duty are towards this end and for this purpose. He bids us remember that Christ is creating for Himself a body which shall perfectly answer to Him, and you are to look upon the Church as that new humanity, the indwelling Spirit of which is Jesus Christ. You are to remember that heaven is not something which is complete, not a place somewhere that you are going to, but that heaven is the body of the new humanity which Christ is building up for Himself that God the Father may be satisfied. You are to feel the on-flow of the health of the living Christ through your life, carrying you upwards by its great strength and endurance.

We now understand Paul's astounding statement, which must often have puzzled us, that we are to grow until we reach the 'stature of the fullness of Christ,' until we reach the full stature of Christ. You have said, 'I shall

never be as tall as Christ'; but that is not what Paul means. You are not saved by yourself; you are one of a vast company, and it is His Church, it is the new humanity which is to grow 'through that which every joint supplieth' until it is of His stature, until the indwelling Christ utterly controls and utterly transfigures His redeemed and living people.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Till I am wholly Thine,
Until this earthly part of me
Glows with Thy fire Divine.

Three Aspects of Religion

1 Cor. xii. 27.—'Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.'

The forms in which religion finds expression are mainly three—the institutional, the intellectual, and the experimental. They may be illustrated in the stages of individual growth.

To the child, religion comes from without. It assumes the form of an institution. It claims to be his teacher and guide. It presents for his acceptance various principles, for his obedience various practices. And to this institutional religion the child submits instinctively and without dispute.

¶ As I try now to analyse the facts, it seems to me that though religion at school was to a large degree cubby-holed, and any individual expression of interest discouraged rather than the contrary, there was no little wisdom in these restraining methods of developing character. I cannot help thinking more and more the older I grow, that in spite of the fact that Christ was a very silent partner in the life of us English boys at Public Schools, He was a very real companion of many of us all the same.[1]

Then comes a second stage. It is the period of youth. Naïve acquiescence in authority, whether of home or of Church, is now no longer possible. He talks with those whose religion differs from his. There dawns the spirit of inquiry and dispute. Youth must have a reason for everything. There are points in his own religion which he begins to challenge. The argumentative, intellectual, period has set in. Religion becomes thought and system and philosophy.

[1] W. T Grenfell, *What Christ Means to Me*, 14, 21.

This stage is not the last. There comes maturity. And here religion is not so much enforced by authority from without, nor yet chiefly the product of an active mind; it is rather a personal experience. He has seen some actual vision. There came a sense of closeness and of contact, experimental realization, by which the Truth is known because it has been felt. The spirit becomes awestruck, unargumentative. Emotion, affection, love, predominate. There is a conscious walk in the presence of the Unseen. The disputatious activities of the reason yield to the calm of insight and of contemplation, when the rapt soul sees the vision of its Redeemer.

Now, while it is certainly true that personal experience is the essence of real religion, it does not follow that the institutional or the intellectual may be safely laid aside.

1. In the first place, let us see why it is that experimental religion cannot do without the institutional. A man who knows God by personal experience may become impatient towards religious institutions which he seems to have outgrown. Institutions are means to an end and that end is personal religion. And if the end is already achieved, why concern oneself any longer about the means? The Church, with its ancient methods and ceremonies, appears stereotyped, unadaptable. It seems to lay the stress on the outward form as contrasted with the inward spirit, becoming thereby positively obstructive to the soul's independent growth. Union with Christ is considered the one essential; union with the Church is held indifferent. To the mystic the worship within may seem to transcend and render needless the imperfect offices of prayer and praise.

(1) This tendency to undervalue the institutional is guilty of a great mistake; it forgets that religion is historic. And Christianity is in a peculiar sense an historical religion. It is inseparably bound up with the events of a special locality and a special time. In the Book of Acts we see it in operation as an institution. And that institution has matured in history. It developed a sacred literature, sacred ministries and sacraments. It has passed through stages in which complete intellectual self-expression was gradually acquired. Now, all this means that institutionalism is deeply ingrained into the very constitution of historic

Christianity. It means that the Church possesses a function in religion which cannot pass away. It means that religion is not only an individual, but also a corporate experience. The institution is that which no individual, however excellent, may neglect, that which it is an essential part of true religion to acknowledge.

(2) But institutionalism has its dangers. Of course it has. What great power has not? Too often it has obstructed human freedom and thwarted the progress of truth. There are portions of Christendom to-day where it operates disastrously upon individual religious growth. Its unwise pressure may partially account for Christendom's divisions. But its exaggerations are not its essence; and if it has sometimes proved injurious, it has none the less wrought inestimable service to mankind. It has been a power for unity. It has held the movements of religious zeal together. It has controlled and directed the eccentricities of devotional self-will. It has developed remarkable capacities for sacrifice and self-surrender. It has incorporated ideas and converted theories into associating forces, blending the diversities of race and temperament together. These are no small achievements.

(3) And, further, consider the limitations of the average individual. Most individuals, whether they know it or not, are inadequate samples of the genus Man. They illustrate at best some fragment of the human ideal, but nothing more. There are, indeed, outstanding personalities, here and there, who combine practical power with dialectical acuteness, suffusing both with the intensity of spiritual experience and devotion. But these are rare. And even they are not complete. Once only has the Perfect Man appeared. The ordinary classification of men according to their temperaments is eminently suggestive of defect. Either they are phlegmatic or else choleric; they are sanguine or melancholy; optimistic or the reverse. Either they are speculative or philosophic, and then often quite unpractical; or they are above all things practical, and then often sublimely indifferent to logic and self-consistency. Now, what does all this mean? It means that the individual is a one-sided creature, limited in many directions by the defects of his qualities.

And assuredly these limitations affect his personal religion. The religion of the individual is, as a rule, one-sided, like himself. It reflects his peculiarities. It gets contracted by his narrowness. He commonly ignores important truths, and exaggerates others which he thinks he understands. And, if he pursues his independent way without control, his version of Christianity becomes fragmentary and disproportioned.

Now the remedy for these individual inadequacies is institutional religion. The corporate consciousness corrects the single mind. It supplements his omissions, broadens his spirit, corrects his self-will. It is a simple psychological fact that we insensibly assimilate in association truths which we do not easily acquire alone. The Church develops the weak and directs the strong. Its corporate devotion enlarges individual piety. It is only as a unit in the Body of Christ that the single soul can achieve the richest growth.

¶ The late Lord Courtney, a man of sincere and independent mind, writes:[1] 'I should be loth as a testimony to have to give up Church-going. It is something to be able to withdraw now and then for an hour or so from the pettiness, the hurry, and the distraction of ordinary life. We go to Church and we enter into an atmosphere of calm. The distilled wisdom of the ages is about us. The oldest narratives of human history are read in our hearing, and through all familiarity of phrase the sincerity of the narrator forces itself upon us. The sense that we are at one with the singers of countless generations is uplifting. Paul's exhortations stimulate our courage. In the teaching and the passion of the Gospels we follow the way of perfect life which leads to victory over death. All this may be possible in the closet. The sublimation of it may startle us as we walk along the streets. But the periodical withdrawal into these houses of service built with hands, helps us to dwell in houses not built with hands.'

2. The other tendency of the religious man is to undervalue the intellectual and argumentative aspect of religion. He who has seen a vision of heavenly things, and caught a glimpse of the vesture of God, may easily care no more for dogma and creed which guided him on the way. Who in his senses can compare love as a theory with love as an experience? Why vex

[1] *The Diary of a Church-Goer.*

the mind with definitions where God Himself is experimentally understood?

So both the mystic and the practical religious man have tended at times to neglect the dogmatic side of Christianity. And support comes to them from an unexpected quarter. A school has arisen to teach that the value of religion consists in its power to satisfy our subjective needs, apart from the question whether its theories are or are not objectively true. At any rate, our faith is true; and the comfort which religion affords is true; and faith is the driving power. It is well for us that this school of thought has arisen, for it carries the depreciation of the intellectual side of religion to its rigorous extreme. But what is certain is this —that, while religion must undoubtedly satisfy our emotional and practical needs, it must also satisfy our reason. Unless religion is believed to correspond with reality it instantly loses its power, simply because its rational foundation is undermined.

¶ There are Christians in all parts of the country who are secretly afraid of reason. They do not like to think themselves, they see no necessity for thinking, they feel that if a man thinks about the doctrines of his faith he is almost certain to become a heretic. The man who thinks is to them what Cassius was to Julius Cæsar. 'Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look; he thinks too much.' They prefer men who are sleek and fat. They make religion merely a sentimental and emotional thing; they put no thought into it. They speak of doctrines as something quite superfluous. They take no interest in doctrines, and as for a dogma, it is nothing but a cur to be kicked about the streets. And as for theology, that is something to be steadily eschewed. Theology, instead of being what it is, the greatest of the sciences, is to them only a foolish piece of stupid speculation. It is just such Christians as these who perpetuate the impression that Christianity has nothing to do with the reason, but moves entirely in the realm of the emotions.[1]

Certainly the argumentative side of religion has grave dangers. It tends to become a question of the head and not one of the heart; to degenerate into a mere philosophy about religion, and to be discussed as if it had nothing to do with the redemption of living souls. It is so easy to substitute intellectual interest in religions for living experience of religion. It would certainly sometimes be better if we argued less and worshipped more.

[1] C. E. Jefferson

Nevertheless, in spite of its dangers, religion cannot stand apart from intellect. Just as moral development requires intellectual growth, so does the development of the spirit. Religion achieves its noblest form when the full capacities of the reason are engaged. The metaphysics of Augustine, the sanctified dialectic of St Paul, only illustrate what the intellect may do for faith when blended with deep spirituality and living experience.

¶ I can see no more reason why salvation should come to the intellectually incapable than to the morally incapable. For simple souls thinking in simple processes, salvation perhaps comes easily, but there is none for the intellectual coward, for the mental sloven and sluggard, for the stupid and obdurate mind. The Believer will think hard and continue to grow and learn, to read and seek discussion as his needs determine.[1]

Our conclusion is that these three elements —the institutional, the intellectual, the experimental—are not successive so much as contemporary; that the task of the individual is to bring them into unity and balance them in due proportion. The social, the intellectual, the personal all have their part in the spiritual development of man. Reason is a godlike faculty, without which no fervour of devotion can be secure. And yet it is not so godlike, after all, as love and will. It is in the personal experience that religion attains its consummation. But that consummation is not to be achieved by throwing the institutional and the intellectual away.

Covetousness Commended

1 Cor. xii. 31.—'But covet earnestly the best gifts.'

Critics of the faith accuse our religion of limiting desire, of ignoring the splendid possibilities of thought and life, and of rendering its disciples content with the meanest attainments and status. Were it indeed the case that the religion of the Christ narrowed life's horizon, impoverished its ideals, diminished the fullness of its spirit and desire, it would

[1] H. G. Wells, *First and Last Things*, 115.

stand utterly condemned. The passion for the best gifts is the source and secret of the world's progress. The unceasing development of things is explained by the illimitable desire, the insatiable hunger, the inextinguishable curiosity and acquisitiveness of the human mind. A system of philosophy or religion that would abate the covetousness of our nature, rendering us passive and unaspiring, is above all things to be deprecated with horror.

That a spiritual faith, realizing itself in high moral perfection, does not repress ambition and desire, but, on the contrary, begets faculty and excellence in all directions, is being continually shown. Men who before their conversion displayed little mental strength, force of character, or audacity of enterprise, subsequently reveal eminent capacity and mastery. In other cases, where character and talent are already in evidence, religious faith has imparted an excelling vivacity and richness.

¶ President Porter, in an address given at Yale on Dr Bushnell, speaks thus of that truly eloquent theologian: 'It was certainly true of Dr Bushnell that the more of a Christian he became, the more individual he was. Everything that was characteristic of him flourished in the sunshine of his faith. If Christ was his, everything was his, and most of all his living self. His faith also increased his energy. It stimulated his imagination. It gave it form and power. Before his new life of faith, the poet in him was scarcely known to himself. But after his eye was opened to those inspiring realities that engird and penetrate this world of sense, he found himself possessed of a poet's imagery and a poet's fervour. His literary resources were enlarged a hundredfold by the elevating power of his faith. His faith also increased his joy in Nature. It softened his heart towards man. It kindled and sustained his public spirit. It justified his ardent hopefulness in human progress by his faith in the resources provided for man in Christ. It stimulated his sympathy with men, and therefore made him more brilliant in conversation and more genial in society.'

Nowhere is genius and its splendid creations more sincerely appreciated than in the Christian Church, and nowhere do men strive more enthusiastically to make the best of themselves and to excel in their vocation, whatever it may be. Nietzsche tells us that 'The Will to Power ought to be the fundamental article of our creed. What is good? All that elevates—the sense of power, the will to power, and power itself. What is bad? All that proceeds from weakness. What is happiness? The feeling that power increases, that resistance is being overcome.' This *is* a fundamental article of our creed. We covet earnestly the greater gifts; we are ambitious to perfect all our powers. We deprecate weakness, defectiveness, ineffectiveness. Power of all kinds, regulated by right and directed to noble uses, is our ideal. The difference, however, is vast between the world's coveting and that of the saints. With its sanction of whatever is great, beautiful, and precious, revelation discovers truths and imposes laws which preserve covetousness from base admixtures and dire consequences.

1. Revelation conserves the purity of covetousness by showing the existence of something higher than the greater gifts. In the reckoning of the worldly mind nothing surpasses knowledge, eloquence, philosophy, beauty, wealth, pleasure. The aristocracy of intellect and power must be considered free from moral obligation. This assumption leads to the most serious results. If we take it for granted that nothing transcends intellectual and social greatness, aspiration forthwith becomes a corrupting quantity, breeding vanity, arrogance, selfishness, injustice, and general lawlessness. After enumerating with admiration the rare gifts of a privileged age, St Paul concludes the chapter with this startling promise, 'A still more excellent way shew I unto you.' Or, as otherwise rendered, 'And now I will point out to you a way of life which transcends all others.' This promise is abundantly fulfilled in the following chapter. In glowing language he celebrates the incomparable beauty and preciousness of love. This grace of life transcends the most splendid gifts of men and angels. The island of Ceylon abounds in precious stones, but the diamond is lacking. The Greeks have dazzled the ages with the number and brilliance of their mental gifts; but they did not perceive the supreme worth of righteousness, the crown jewel that sanctifies all the rest, and history records their failure. The Apostle supplies the deficiency. He declares that the supreme law of life, that by which all endowments and achievements must be bounded and governed, is the moral law

as expounded by our Lord. That the gifts of genius cannot be accepted as substitutes for the graces, that the most superb powers are vain divorced from righteousness, is the uncompromising doctrine of St Paul, and of revelation throughout. So long as our talents are controlled by the spirit of holiness, all is well; no sooner, however, do we disown the supremacy of moral obligation than degeneration sets in, and the corruption of the best becomes the worst.

2. The Christian faith preserves the purity of desire by insisting on the high worth of inferior gifts and service. The antichristian temper soon creates in men of superior parts the ugly habit of looking down with contempt on their humbler brethren. Says Nietzsche, 'The weak and defective shall go to the wall: that is the first principle of our charity. And we must help them to go.' The science of our day inculcates another lesson. It delights to bring out the immense significance of the ordinary, of the unconsidered trifles of Nature. Bateson, taking certain phenomena discovered in the sweet pea, showed that they might have a direct bearing on a problem so important as that of the nature of sex. Lovers of Nature know that there is nothing of all her contents but must be held in reverence; that the grandeur of the whole is expressed in the meanest, minutest fragment, if one only knows how to interpret it.

What science has learned respecting Nature, St Paul discerned concerning humanity. In an age when the humble were despised, the Apostle recognized the indispensability and honourableness of the lowly, and did them sincerest homage. The instructed Christian discriminates and variously appraises the vast variety of gifts with which humanity is dowered. But as the scientist without inconsistency embraces great and small in a catholic admiration, so all who have the mind of Christ reverence, without contradiction or paradox, the ten-talented and the one. All gifts of thought, utterance, or craftsmanship are boons of the same Lord, they are divided severally as He wills, and amid all diversities of working one Divine control prevails; thus the illustrious shine without egotism and the humble serve without shame. So long as the stewardship is faithfully discharged, none may be puffed up, none humiliated.

¶ Ruskin says: 'God appoints to every one of His creatures a separate mission; and if they discharge it honourably, if they quit themselves like men, and faithfully follow the light which is in them, withdrawing from it all cold and quenching influence, there will assuredly come of it such burning as in its appointed mode and measure shall shine before men, and be of service, constant and holy.'

3. Acting in the Christian spirit, we are enthused with desire for the greater gifts without envying those who already possess such gifts. In the light of Scriptural teaching we come to see that all gifts are of God, that in Him they exist in infinite fullness, and therefore there is no room for mutual jealousy. Finding ourselves at the fountain of power and beauty, of wisdom and joy, no motive exists for spoiling our neighbour. On the shore of the immeasurable sea we begrudge no man his cup, however it overflows. We conceive a pure love for great and lovely things themselves, not for the sake of any paltry social gratification they may bring, and vaingloriousness is excluded. Knowing the infinite richness of all beatitudes in the fellowship of God, we no more envy our brother his good than we begrudge him his portion in the air, his share in the sun, or his inheritance in heaven's rain and dew. The lofty conceptions of the New Testament touching the wealth of the saints in God forbid that they should envy one another. 'All are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.'

4. Selfishness is effectually eliminated by the doctrine that all our gifts are for the common profit. Wherever the selfish spirit prevails, vicious covetousness springs rankly; but where social duty is understood as expounded in this chapter, enlarged desire can work no mischief either to the individual or to the community. Indeed, the common thirsting for personal perfection, the striving for high ideals and great things, can only enhance the general good and happiness. The social temper disciplines all passions, and among the rest the passion to excel. Oriental jungles produce flowers whose peculiar sweetness approaches nauseousness; but when their scent mingles with the rest, the compound is singularly rich and acceptable. Thus men who, so far as they affect isolation,

create unhappiness for themselves and others, in social sympathy and service complete their own felicity and enrich the ampler air. Whatever may be the nature and degree of our endowments, they must prove a blessing to all concerned, whilst devoted to the service of God and humanity; the more our gift is magnified, the more the blessing is intensified.

¶ In her poem entitled 'A Musical Instrument,' Mrs Browning, of course, intends to teach, by the great god Pan hacking and hewing with his hard bleak steel at the patient reed from the river until not a sign of a leaf was left, that the poet is fashioned through suffering; but she seems to suggest also that the man is marred in the process of making the poet. Let this be as it may, the man is not lost in the saint, nor is he mutilated in the transformation. Every original gift is evoked by the power, sublimated by the grace, of Christ; the saint grows into a perfect man, everything concerning him receives the last touch; and, straining after the highest prizes of life and destiny, he attains them.[1]

The Hymn of Love

1 Cor. xii. 31.—'And yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.'

St John has been called the Apostle of love, and St Paul has been marked off as the Apostle of faith; yet nowhere in the New Testament has love been set to such beautiful music, to such 'linked sweetness long drawn out,' as in the thirteenth chapter of this Epistle. It is this Apostle of faith that places the crown of supremacy on the brow of love.

¶ The following words are found written opposite the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, on the margin of a Greek New Testament on which Dr Schaff wrote private thoughts. 'A psalm of love. The Song of Songs of the New Testament. This is the height of the Epistle. Love is the solution of all difficulties, the cure of all evils in the Corinthian Church. Compare John xvii., Romans viii., Hebrews xi.—all classical chapters without any parallel in ancient literature, and alone sufficient to prove inspiration. If Paul had written nothing else, he would be one of the greatest writers and benefactors. Here is the harmony between Paul and John; both learned the lesson of love from Christ who manifested it in the highest and purest form, unknown before. Bengel has rightly said, *Deus non est spes, Deus non est fides, sed Deus est caritas* (God is not hope, God is not faith, but God is love).'[1]

[1] W. L. Watkinson, *Moral Paradoxes of St Paul*, 162.

The sudden burst into this rapturous Hymn of Love is not unlike the manner of Paul. In settling small matters of disputed boundaries on the earth, he never loses the guidance and inspiration of the over-arching heavens. If men are troubled about subsidiary things, he lifts them as by holy magic into a loftier plane of vision, and bids them share the inspirations of Diviner ideas and a richer life. In this chapter Paul has been assessing the values of certain 'gifts' with all the precision of an accountant; for the Apostle had a genius for arrangement, and administration. His higher vision never permitted him to be unpractical in the direction of Church or personal matters. And of all the unruly and unpromising things with which even an Apostle could deal, surely there was nothing more unruly or unpromising than pride in the gift of 'tongues.' Too much in the way of tongues often means too little in the way of love.

1. St Paul gives us no definition of love. There are some things—and they are the simplest and the most elemental—that defy definition altogether; and there are times when definition is destructive. Who ever questioned the beauty of the sunset? But who can define it. The astronomer can give us the mathematics of it. There doubtless is mathematics in the sunset; but there is no sunset glory in the mathematics. There is a chemistry of colours; but there is no wistful, healing light in that chemistry. Beauty defined is beauty destroyed.

In this great Hymn of Love there are no analyses, no abstractions, no speculations. Here is all the murmur and the colour of life. We are not asked to study love as an abstraction. We are asked to walk with love, a kindly, kingly presence, to hear how love says the thing that must be said day by day, to see how love does the thing that must be done day by day, to see how love endures the thing that must be endured day by day; to watch how

[1] D. S. Schaff, *The Life of Philip Schaff*, 478.

love stoops low beneath its brother's burden, and keeps that silence that is more full and availing than speech. Surely this is the best way to come at love's true meaning. To find out what life is we watch what life does.

So it is not a definition but a conception of love that the Apostle aims at. It is true he speaks of it, as it were, in detail. He shows love to us in the performance of definite concrete services indicative of its nature. But all the way through this lyric passage the part exists for the whole. Every phrase, every word brings its gift of light, enlarging and enriching our conception of that great Something that all the words and phrases together cannot finally express.

2. Let us look, now, at the great ideas that the Hymn embodies, around which its more detailed teaching naturally arranges itself.

The refrain of the first three verses is this: 'If I have not love.' And the vision of life without love is a vision of vanity and emptiness. Love is the secret of vitality. It is the essence of true life. It is so vast and mighty and inclusive a principle that, apart from it, the forms and forces of life are void and meaningless. Then in verses four and five love is set forth as the secret of character. There is no real virtue that is not born of love. There is no true patience save the patience of love, no true contentment save the contentment of love, no true humility save the humility of love, no true self-sacrifice save the self-sacrifice of love. Then come some buoyant and triumphant words about love bearing, believing, hoping, and enduring all things. This is the optimism of love. Out of this optimism comes love's masterful defiances of pain and wrong, its unwearying conciliations, its hold upon a handful of deathless hopes. Then suddenly another light flashes across the page, a light that has travelled farther than anything else that gleams there. It is eternal light. 'Love never faileth.' But even this great word about love, the untiring and undying, does not complete the picture. We have yet some way to go ere we come to the confines of the ineffable. The Apostle takes us on, and shows us love the goal of life and its fulfilment. Love is to bring us to our full stature and real powers. Love is to bring us into the nameless mystery of immediate knowledge of God. Through it shall the soul find perfect communion with Him. 'Then shall I know even as also I have been known.'

¶ Mr Moody, who has had as much opportunity as perhaps any man of our generation in the study of character, especially among religious people, has said: 'No words of mine can better describe his life or character than those in which he has presented to us *The Greatest Thing in the World*. Some men take an occasional journey into the thirteenth of First Corinthians, but Henry Drummond was a man who lived there constantly, appropriating its blessings and exemplifying its teachings. As you read what he terms the analysis of love, you find that all its ingredients were interwoven into his daily life, making him one of the most lovable men I have ever known. Was it courtesy you looked for; he was a perfect gentleman. Was it kindness; he was always preferring another. Was it humility; he was simple and not courting favour. It could be said of him truthfully, as it was said of the early apostles, "that men took knowledge of him, that he had been with Jesus." Nor was this love and kindness only shown to those who were close friends. His face was an index of his inner life. It was genial and kind, and made him, like his Master, a favourite with children. . . . Never have I known a man who, in my opinion, lived nearer the Master, or sought to do His will more fully.'[1]

Here see, acquitted of all vain pretence,
The reign of genuine Charity commence.
Though scorn repay her sympathetic tears,
She still is kind, and still she perseveres;
The truth she loves a sightless world blas-
pheme—
'Tis childish dotage, a delirious dream!
The danger they discern not they deny;
Laugh at their only remedy, and die.
But still a soul thus touch'd can never cease,
Whoever threatens war, to speak of peace:
Pure in her aim, and in her temper mild,
Her wisdom seems the weakness of a child.
She makes excuses where she might condemn;
Reviled by those that hate her, prays for them;
Suspicion lurks not in her artless breast;
The worst suggested, she believes the best;
Not soon provok'd, however stung and teas'd;
And, if perhaps made angry, soon appeas'd;

[1] G. Adam Smith, *The Life of Henry Drummond*, 8.

She rather waives, than will dispute, her right;
And, injur'd, makes forgiveness her delight.
Such was the portrait an apostle drew;
The bright original was one he knew;
Heav'n held his hand—the likeness must be true.[1]

3. It is well for us to bear in mind the great thought that love is one—it is a unity. The Greeks had several words for it: *Eros*, the love of beauty, love that is fired with passion and laden with desire; *philia*, the love of a man for his friend, more quiet and less selfish emotion; *philadelphia*, used only of actual kinship, and *philanthropia*, a kindly attitude towards mankind, something more general in its operation than *eros* and *philia*. The word in this great Christian hymn of love is none of these. *Agape* is not found in any of the heathen writers. It is a word that Trench describes as having been 'born within the bosom of revealed religion.' By reason of its birthright it has meanings that set it lofty and lonely amid all other attempts to utter the master word of human life. Its uniqueness we shall not easily miss. One has but to compare the *Agape* of St Paul with the *Eros* of Greek tragedy to see what a gulf can lie between words, and how an idea can be cleansed, and lifted, and amplified. Love in Greek tragedy is a kind of madness, a destructive and disastrous obsession. Love in this great Christian hymn is the ideal sanity of life. It is the basal principle of spiritual health. It stands for all that is permanent and peaceful. It is the maker of character and the revealer of truth. It glows with the fire of a great passion, a passion that consumes, not the life in which it burns, as does the flame of Eros, but rather all the mean, dark, shameful things that are morally alien to that life.

So the love of which the Apostle sings excels all other emotions and responses that bear this great name; but on the other hand it is that which truly co-ordinates and spiritually vitalizes every form love is capable of assuming. It makes some kinship between love of beauty in the earth and love for the beauty of holiness. It makes the love that desires and the love that renounces parts of the same great mystery. If love to man and love to God are two essentially different things, then the name 'Father' gives no clue to the heart of the Eternal. If the love that lights our homes is in nowise related to the love that makes heaven, then heaven can have no meaning for us.

It is only in God that the oneness of love is a vital truth for the world. But let a man know that love which is St Paul's theme, and he shall find that there is no channel of his life through which it cannot flow. It is love lifted to the highest degree, love that can find no altar whereon to lay its sacrifice but the altar of that temple whereof the name is 'God is here'; that can find no service but that selfless service of God in the brotherhood that is the earthly sacrament of the Christly life.

[1] Cowper.

The Superlative Way

1 Cor. xiii. 1–3.—'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.'

THE persons to whom these words were addressed were full of what may be called Christian ambitions. They coveted what they reckoned Christian gifts; the Church of Christ was for them a stage on which they aspired to be conspicuous figures. The Apostle has their correction in view when he writes, 'Covet earnestly the best gifts, and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.' It is literally a way in the superlative degree—a way having in perfection all the qualities which ought to characterize a way; a way open to every one, unobstructed, leading straight to the goal of Christian greatness. This is the way of love which he proceeds to celebrate.

It has been finely remarked that the Apostle illustrates in his very first words the lesson he wishes to teach: 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love.' An unloving spirit would have said: 'Though *you* speak.' The instinctive courtesy of the Apostle is inspired by love and shows how thoroughly he himself has learned his lesson. The simplest way in which we can enter into his thought is to make clear to ourselves what the gifts are which are sometimes supposed to super-

sede love, but which really depend upon it for their value in the Church.

1. *Emotional gifts.*—The gift of tongues was an emotional gift. It was an ecstasy of feeling by which men were carried away and broke into rapturous inarticulate utterances. The sublime realities of the Christian faith,—God, Christ, the forgiveness of sins, the assurance of immortality—as they broke into the common life of man, disturbed its equilibrium profoundly. Nature rocked under the impact of the supernatural as a boat rocks in the water when a heavy weight is suddenly thrown into it. This emotional disturbance, though in some ways incalculable, seems always to have had one character. It was an ecstasy of praise. Probably the nearest approach to it that most Christians make is when they are carried away by the feeling of a revival meeting. At the time of Mr Moody's revival the largest churches and halls were crowded out for months by multitudes surrendering themselves to the emotion. The words and the tunes—perhaps in some cases the tunes even more than the words—sang themselves into people's ears, into their very nerves and brain. The church was full of men who floated, so to speak, on this wave of emotion; an unutterable joy in the redeeming love of God seemed to sustain their life; it was full, as they would have said in the early days, of people speaking with tongues.

¶ It was in the year 1859 or, possibly, 1860. I was about seven years old at the time, and the religious Revival was on, in all its power in all the neighbouring chapels. The evidence of the presence and power of the 'Spirit' was overwhelming. Men and women were, quite genuinely, beside themselves with religious excitement. They broke out in the services, glorifying God by the help of hymns and verses, and not infrequently in language of their own which, owing to their 'exalted' condition, was sometimes marvellous in its power and beauty. Their voices mingled together in a confusion that usually put the preacher to silence, and, not seldom, lasted far into the night. Occasionally, I watched strange scenes amidst the excitement. For instance, I saw a farm labourer—a very shoddy character in fact—on his knees in the big pew, beat in the panels of the pulpit with his bare fists; and I watched the finest of the church elders, one of the ablest men I have ever met, go from end to end of the chapel and up and down its aisles, on his knees, praising God all the time and manifestly in the power of an overwhelming force.[1]

This is an experience which many make light of and even deprecate. But this is not how it is regarded by the Apostle. He knew as well as any modern moralist that the promise of the new emotion is not always fulfilled. He knew that the equilibrium of the old nature which had been momentarily disturbed by the sense of Christian realities was too easily restored at the old level, and that men who had spoken with tongues might relapse and become 'sensual, not having the spirit.' But in itself this emotional susceptibility to spiritual realities is good. 'I thank my God,' says the Apostle, 'that I speak with tongues more than you all.' But good as this emotional susceptibility is, gift of God as it is, it is not good if it terminates in itself. It cannot be the be-all and the end-all of the gospel. Taken by itself, it is no more than sounding brass or clanging cymbal, those deafening empty noises with which the Corinthians were familiar even in pagan worship. Thank God for every Christian emotion, the Apostle says, but the question on which everything turns is: What service is being done, by these prized exaltations of mine, to the Church which is the Body of Christ? For what ministries of love do they furnish the driving power?

¶ Emotion is a good servant, but a bad master. It must be put to the service of right thinking and true action. In this transference of feeling to conduct it may seem to lose its freedom, but it acquires new powers and finds new ways for its expression. The worth of religious sensibility is to be tested in the adventures for truth and goodness to which it calls men, and in the eagerness of self-sacrifice to which it inspires them.[2]

2. *Intellectual gifts.*—From emotional the Apostle advances to intellectual gifts: 'though I have prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge.' The uncontrollable emotion called speaking with tongues is no doubt a spiritual gift, when it is Christian realities that stimulate it, but it is the most elementary of spiritual gifts. It is the new life, indeed, but

[1] Sir Henry Jones, *Old Memories*, 52.
[2] *Essays from 'The Times.'*

in a turbid, semi-sensuous form, a form which is transcended when the Christian realities not only excite emotion but take possession of intelligence. The world with Christ and redemption in it—the world in which the Son of God and the forgiveness of sins and eternal glory are real things—is another world. It makes another appeal to the intelligence, excites other reflections, demands other interpretations, reveals other prospects. The intellect which submits to the impact of the gospel receives a shock as startling and momentous as that which raises the emotions to ecstasy; the mind of man is born again under the supreme revelation of God. It gets an understanding of the world and of all God's ways with it, and purposes in it, undreamt of before. As St Paul says here, it gets the gift of prophecy, and all mysteries and all knowledge are thrown open to it.

Probably no one ever had a more vivid experience of this than the writer of this Epistle. If any man ever had his mind born again and his world made new in a great experience it was he. The enthusiasm of the great speculative geniuses like Plato and Spinoza, who have tried to set this unintelligible world in an intelligible light before our eyes, is cold compared to the ardour with which Paul reconstructs his universe with Christ for its Alpha and Omega, its principle and goal. 'In him,' he has the exaltation of mind to write, 'were all things created, that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and in him all things are one.' The man who was capable of thinking and saying this did not undervalue the intellect and its use in the Christian life, but he felt also that no attainments in this direction touched the centre any more than the emotional excitement of tongues. Without love, to make the intellectual Christian the servant of the ignorant; without love, to check the intellectual when he is tempted to despise others, or to use his power to establish a selfish ascendancy over them, knowledge is nothing. Without love, it does not count.

¶ There was an impression, I think, at one time, among some who only knew about Halliday Douglas, that in his character the strength of his intellect somewhat restrained the ministry of his affections. It was not so. It was the tenderness of his affections quite as much as the strength of his intellect that won for him the devotion of those who knew him. He placed intellect high in his ideal of character, but growingly he placed the affections higher. So, he thought, one learned Christ. I remember his telling me once, with great delight, that he had found an ideal text from which to preach from a university pulpit—'Covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.'[1]

¶ In his *Conversations with Eckermann* (Christmas Day, 1825), Goethe says: 'We cannot deny that Platen has many brilliant qualities, but he is wanting in—*love*. He loves his readers and his fellow-poets as little as he loves himself, and thus we may apply to him the maxim of the Apostle—"Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." I have lately read the poems of Platen, and cannot deny his great talent. But, as I said, he is deficient in *love*, and thus he will never practise the effect which he ought.'

> But was it thou—I think
> Surely it was !—that bard
> Unnamed, who, Goethe said,
> *Had every other gift, but wanted love;*
> Love, without which the tongue
> Even of angels sounds amiss ?

Matthew Arnold applied this to Heine, but Goethe meant Platen.[2]

Most Christians, probably, at some time or other, have touched experimentally on speaking with tongues, but one cannot be so sure about prophecies and mysteries and knowledge. There are always those in all Churches, of course, to whom Christianity is pre-eminently a kind of knowledge, a system of truth, or rather of truths. It means the truth of the Bible, or of the creed, or of some outline of Christian ideas in which they have been brought up. They have a zeal for this, and they are moved by what calls it in question as they are by nothing else. The ideal Christian for them is the defender of the faith, Mr Valiant for the Truth. It does not perhaps occur to them that

[1] A. H. Douglas, *Sermons*, 133.
[2] J. Moffatt in *The Expositor*, Oct. 1925.

this is the type of intellectualism which is most likely to be loveless. But much as he admired the character, Bunyan knew its perils when he told how *Mr Valiant for the Truth* was assailed by *Wildhead, Inconsiderate,* and *Pragmatical.*

3. *Practical gifts.*—The Apostle becomes more venturesome and paradoxical as he goes on to ever higher gifts. 'Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing.' Faith here is not used in the general sense of that trust in Jesus which makes a man a Christian; it is a specific spiritual gift operating not on the emotional or on the intellectual, but on the practical side of human nature. It is the gift which raises Christian efficiency to a high point. The consequences of inefficiency are so miserable and depressing that it is no wonder this gift is highly valued. What is of so much value to the Church as that it should have men in it who, in spite of obstacles, can do what needs to be done? Not men who say what they ought to say, and then nothing happens, but men who positively achieve things, men who overcome the difficulties at which others helplessly gaze. If anyone prized this practical Christian efficiency it was Paul, who was a conspicuous illustration of it himself, and who often sought it in vain in his associates; yet not even this is the vital thing in the Christian life. We can almost think that as he wrote these words about the power of faith Paul had in his mind not only the saying of Jesus about bidding the mountain remove and be cast into the sea, but the solemn words at the close of the Sermon on the Mount: 'Many shall say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many mighty works?' It might well seem incomprehensible that spiritual powers should be wielded, and spiritual efficiency in a supreme degree exhibited, by men whom Jesus rejects; but Paul felt the truth there was in it, and so may we. The efficient man may lose himself in his very efficiency; the sense may steal upon his mind that his is the practical capacity which gets the belt upon the wheel and transmits force and sees that work is done; and when this happens, all is lost. For Christianity is not in this region of outward efficiency after all; it is in the soul. A man may be a great Christian worker, as we say, and no saint. To wound love is a terrible thing, and how can love be wounded more terribly than by offering any doings or achievements as a substitute for it?

¶ Numbers of earnest people to-day make a kind of fetish of their religious and philanthropic activity. They are feverishly busy at the task of improving the world, and they admire themselves because they feel that they are doing so much. Persons of this type must have suggested to Swedenborg a grim episode in his vision of hell; he describes how in hell he saw one region where everybody was incessantly employed in trying to make everybody else virtuous. We discover by mournful experience that, when men combine in Christian service, they do not thereby escape from vulgar temptations and ambitions. There appear to be special devils which haunt conventions and committee-rooms. 'Work,' as a wise man wrote, 'is the Dagon of to-day. Instead of being a witness to our faith in the God in whose name we do it, it is too often a vast monument of our disbelief in His ability to do without us.'[1]

So we are driven back by the Apostle to the superlative way—the way along which we can really make Christian progress. Emotion has its value when excited by Christian realities—so has intellect—so has energy—so has sacrifice; but the one thing needful is love. And what is love? A great theologian has defined it as the identification of ourselves with God's interest in others. God *has* an interest in others. Do we realize this, and that the question whether we love or not can be answered only in the light of it?

Now what the theologian defined the Apostle describes. He pictures for us in a glow of enthusiasm the modes in which love manifests itself in a world like ours. 'Love suffereth long, is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself—seeketh not her own, thinketh no evil.' We know this is not our likeness; but is there something in us which draws us inevitably and instinctively towards it, which makes us feel that it would be our likeness if we yielded to the constraint of the love of God? The greatest part of our perfection, as Robert Bruce says, is to thirst for perfection—to look on this picture with humble longing hearts till we begin to grow like it.

But we ought not to say—to look on this

[1] T. H. Darlow, *The Love of God*, 204.

picture. For what the theologian defines and the Apostle depicts is illustrated and embodied in our Lord Himself, and what we have to do is to look at Him as we see Him identifying Himself with God's interest in us. 'Herein is love.'

Love and Prophecy

1 Cor. xiii. 2.—'And though I have the gift of prophecy . . . and have not love, I am nothing.'

WHAT is a prophet? We all suppose we know, or can form a tolerably correct notion. Perhaps we have at last got rid of the inveterate error of identifying prophecy with prediction, and thinking of the prophet as having for his chief credentials the power to foretell, through Divine inspiration, the things that are going to happen in the far-off future. But even when we have done this, and recognized that the prophet is not a 'foreteller' but a 'forthteller,' one who speaks 'for' and 'in the name of' God, the declarer of His truth and His righteousness, and of men's responsibilities, even at this stage there may interpose various conventional associations that hinder us in recognizing the true prophet when he appears.

Let us assume that we agree in thinking of the prophet as having pre-eminently to do with the existence of good and evil in the world. The next most prevailing idea in our minds is probably that which connects prophecy with God's judgments. 'Woe unto you,' seems to us the most characteristic cry of the 'prophet.' 'A prophet of evil.' We almost instinctively couple together the two ideas. When some one utters a timely warning which we think perhaps untimely, it is a natural retort to cry, 'Do not be a prophet of evil.' But how seldom do we hear or utter the phrase 'a prophet of good'! Yet there is no reason why we should not. If God has promised, through the length and breadth of His revelation, that misery and disaster must be the wages of sin, He has also promised, as constantly and emphatically, that happiness and all good must be the end and reward of righteousness. Therefore it is certain that a 'prophet of good' is the necessary companion and complement of the other more familiar phrase.

1. *The Prophetic Function.*—The prophet, in common with all moral and spiritual teachers, has two functions to perform—to destroy and to build up. Christ, greatest of prophets, appeared doing both these things. He shattered to atoms the Pharisaic theory of the Sabbath; but He gave in exchange the eternal principle of the institution, as designed for man's good. St Paul, in the like spirit, overthrew the then dominant belief as to the restrictions upon religious liberty, but he built up, in their stead, the true law and spirit of Christian freedom. The prophet must do both these things. He has to denounce evil and to refute unworthy views of God. But his message cannot end there. For to denounce, and not to recognize anything as worthy of praise; to predict evil and disaster, and never to let it appear that there is triumph and blessedness in store for those who remain loyal to the Kingdom of God—this may impress men, but it does not convert them, and does not inspire them. It is by 'hope we are saved,' said St Paul to the Romans. The saying is the keynote of his teaching, as of all the gospel. It is just as markedly the keynote of Old Testament prophecy. By hope, and not by despair. And thus the prophet who makes despair the dominant accent of his message is an incomplete, and therefore a dangerous prophet. The prophet of despair will always be popular, if only because it is easier to despair than to hope. But if it be true that it is by hope we are saved, then the true prophet must be he who has the gift of instilling and fostering hope.

2. *The Prophetic Temper and Method.*—This brings us to recognize that there is something else besides the message he bears that determines the credentials of the true prophet. There is a prophetic message; but there is also, still more important, a prophetic temper, a prophetic tone, and a prophetic method. Beneath all differences of individual temperament in the Hebrew prophets, we find resemblance in this respect. There is, of course, a common hatred of evil and passion for good. But hatred of evil may show itself in various ways. There is that hatred with which God regards evil. But there is a hatred of it so blended with scorn and intolerance in him who feels it, that the God-like heart of love and pity that should inspire it seems wanting. The genuine prophetic mind, as regards sin and the sinner, is the mind of God. As we mark the Hebrew

prophet's indignation towards the nation or the individual who has forgotten God, we see that indignation showing itself in fiercest language of reprobation, sometimes with branding sarcasm and irony, but these accents are never allowed to drown the deeper accent of sorrow. 'The pity of it! the pity of it!'—this poignant cry is audible amid all the prophetic outpourings, and this because they are interpenetrated with the Divine love for sinning men. Tenderness, yearning, pleading, the anticipation of the words of Him to whom they all pointed—'They will not come unto me that they might have life'; 'My yoke is easy, and my burden is light'; 'I will give you rest for your souls'—all this marks the true prophet's method and tone. Hope for the hopeless; blessing and restoration for all who will turn, even at the eleventh hour—this is the burden of the prophet's message. To be dissatisfied with self is doubtless the first stage in the recovery of a worldly nature. But to leave it at that stage; to leave despair in possession of men's souls; to knock down effete beliefs without any definite guidance, or any promise of Divine co-operation in the task of redemption—this is to leave men in their sins; seeing them, perhaps, more clearly in their ghastliness, but disposed to accept the inevitable, not to rise and struggle against it.

3. *The Prophetic Ideal.*—In this respect we may do well to revise our notions of the prophetic ideal. The world is full of teachers, claiming (in Jeremy Taylor's phrase) the 'liberty of prophesying.' The prophets, as an order or caste, no longer exist. The pulpit has no monopoly of the office. It shares the function with many others, appealing to larger audiences, and often with far greater gifts of insight and eloquence. In general literature and in the columns of the periodical press men are being taught and encouraged, often forcibly and nobly, if often, also, forcibly and ignobly. Bad and good prophets are at work all around us. But still, apart from the actual morality enforced by these teachers, we must have observed that the mood and the temper, the aim and the inspiring motive of each prophetic utterance really determines its prophetic value as an instrument for moving men along the higher paths of duty. The declaration of a truth is not in itself a prophecy, though it have novelty and freshness, and be in advance of the prevision of the ordinary crowd. One of the signs of our day is the abundance of prophecy, and of prophecy often without wings and without point because unhumanized by love. The cynic may be declaring truths all day long, but he is not exercising the prophetic function, for there is not that lying underneath his scornful criticisms of life which has power to touch the spiritual in us.

¶ 'To do good to men,' says Amiel, 'we must pity, not scorn them; we must say of them, not *fools*, but *unhappy*. The language of the pessimist and the nihilist is less freezing than the banter of the agnostic.'

¶ In a letter to a young friend Bishop Mandell Creighton has this wise counsel: 'There is a certain amount of cynicism in all of us, but it has to be checked by other things. I suppose that cynicism is natural to one who observes the current of life without plunging into it. People seem to strive after such little things, to waste their energies over what profits not, to do little acts of meanness, to try and show themselves something that they are not. . . . You are yourself straightforward, and therefore see the weaknesses of others. It is well to do so, but there is need of something to make one's observation useful. What is needed is sympathy. We should all of us try to feel something of the Divine love towards man, in spite of his weaknesses. "Men my brothers" should be a thought constantly before us.'[1]

Satire, again, though it claims to be directed against human vice and folly, is not, and cannot be, prophecy. We admire the knowledge of human nature displayed by the great satirists of our literature. It is a fascinating thing to see our cherished, but carefully-concealed, littlenesses and weaknesses dragged ruthlessly from their hiding-place, and held up to anger or derision. The world enjoys the sight, but the world is not made the better by it. The evil in us may be constrained to change its outward shapes by fear of the satirist's scourge, but no impetus is given towards the deliverance from evil, or towards the passion for righteousness. And even when we have moved into a serener atmosphere than that of the cynic or satirist, when we are sitting at the feet of the philosopher and thinker, we are still not of necessity much nearer to the prophetic ideal. We owe to such men

[1] *Life and Letters of Mandell Creighton*, i. 323.

and such women a great debt of gratitude; to such as he

> Who took the suffering human race,
> And read each wound, each weakness clear,
> And struck his finger on the place
> And said: *Thou ailest here, and here!*

But thinkers such as these are teachers of other thinkers; they belong to the science of morality; they do not address the common people, nor do the common people hear them gladly. We may not confer on these the sacred name of prophet. The prophet hates sin and loves the sinner, and, however removed from the crowd in genius and inspiration, stands shoulder to shoulder with them as fellow-sinners and needers of the common redemption.

We want hope, to counteract the ever-gathering clouds of despair and disappointment. We want life, to quicken the dull deadness of content that is wrapping us around. We want the prophet's words of wisdom, but not less the prophet's tones of earnestness and love to draw us from our apathy or our torpor. We want the men who shall build up a hope and a faith for us; not the men who shall merely burn up with anger or intellectual scorn the errors we have committed, the false ideas we are slaves to. We shall have done something towards amending our condition if we turn and study again the characteristics of the old Hebrew prophets, and resolve that we will look up to those who share their spirit and walk in their footsteps. The true prophet is the worker after the manner of Christ—Christ denouncing with fiercest wrath the Pharisee, and Christ weeping over Jerusalem, or at the grave of Lazarus. Christ delivered men by rekindling hope. That is how we must help to deliver them, walking in His steps. Every one of us, according to the measure of the gift bestowed, may be a prophet in his kind. Every one may receive wisdom from on high and diffuse it among men. Every one may realize God's love, and show it in his turn to others.

¶ It may be little more than a coincidence in the life of Charles Gordon that the study of the Hebrew prophets, and even the exercise of his own prophetic imagination, made a striking feature of that unique personality. To seek for guidance in prophecy, and to apply prophecy to interpreting the present and future of his race, seems to have had a fascination for him. But not because of these things will he stand for ever as one of the grandest prophetic figures of his time. He will live, as a prophet, because he interpreted God and diffused the kingdom of heaven by his life as well as his words; because through the length and breadth of Christendom men's conceptions of duty and of the possibilities of human nature were heightened and quickened; because, in the light of his example, all goodness seems brighter, and all baseness seems cast into deeper shadow; because 'greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend.'[1]

Failings of Christian Students

1 Cor. xiii. 2.—'Though I understand all knowledge and have not love, I am nothing.'

1. Although the profession of teaching is so honourable a one, and although a life spent in study and research may prove of such inestimable value to humanity, it is curious that they are sometimes slightingly spoken of. Notice that, while the titles professor, teacher, scholar, student are all honourable ones, there is another set of expressions—pedant, pedagogue, bookworm, blue stocking—which reveals the popular mind and the general idea.

This conception of the teacher or student, or of both combined in one personality, finds expression in fiction. Oliver Goldsmith, Sir Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, George Eliot have given us pictures seldom drawn, indeed, without sympathy, but yet leaving the reader with the idea that the type portrayed is grotesque. It is so also in the drama. The professor or savant is made to cut a ridiculous figure on the stage. He is not seen in his own familiar surroundings, the lecture-room, the study, or the laboratory. He comes on shambling, unkempt, a clumsy, awkward intruder into a gaiety which he cannot share or even interpret, although he is himself the unconscious cause of heightening it.

Students may have a feeling of resentment against such pictures, and attribute them to the prejudice and jealousy of the foolish and ignorant towards the wise and learned. Yet that does not seem quite to cover the issue.

[1] A. Ainger, in *The Anglican Pulpit of To-day*, 344.

We are aware from history that all learning and study until the Renaissance was practically confined to monastic houses. It was the glory of the monastic system that these houses were the asylum of scholars. Study then meant withdrawal from the world. Of course it is far otherwise now; but the tendency remains, the legacy is ours, the man of learning and research avoids the claims of society, and the more he knows of books the less he knows his fellows. The student of to-day not unseldom carries on, in circumstances far dissimilar, this spirit and temper which is the legacy of the monk. Some of us may need a caution on this head. It is only real genius that can excuse eccentricity or priggishness. And if we have a message to deliver as teachers, or indeed as writers, we must look to it that it is not weakened in delivery by any deliberate isolation on our part from the world of humanity, by any neglect of courtesy and good manners.

It seems quite certain that Cowper's poetry would have had vastly more influence had it not been produced and shaped by his little, flattering feminine entourage. We may not regard Charles Kingsley as a genius of the highest order; but the gifts he had, and the powers he wielded were surely due to his personality, the chief note of which was a passionate love of humanity. It is quite true that some monumental works have been written in absolute and deliberate retirement; Richard Hooker supplies a striking example. His great book could never have been written if he had not withdrawn from the controversies of the Temple to an out-of-the-way Wilts village. Yet in our humbler instances and slighter enterprises we must remember the danger of exclusive attention to books; we must throw off the habit of reserve which clings too closely about the scholar and the scientist; we must know the human beings around us, read their characters, interpret their hopes and their fears, and then give all we are and all we have that we may help to raise them from the dust of the earth, to feel the breath of heaven about them.

¶ It was Lord Lyttelton who said, 'I dare not trust myself alone even with the best books.' Some striking verses in the *Spectator* give fine expression to this—

O pale-faced Theologian whose soft hands
And inkstained fingers never gripped the oar
Or swung the hammer; weary with your books,
How can your slumbering senses comprehend
The breadth and virile purpose of the men
Who bore their joyous tale through quickened lands
To the great heart of Rome: the shipwreck'd Paul,
Wandering Ulysses-like to far-off isles
And barbarous peoples; or those peasant kings,
Who ever 'mid voluptuous cities wore
No mediæval halo, but the air
Of some free fisher battling with the wind
That blows across the Galilean hills?

2. Yet the Christian faith bids us take a step beyond this. Mere knowledge of men, a shrewd penetration into character, has been turned by the unscrupulous to unworthy ends, and even to base purposes. That is not the line along which Christian ideals draw Christian hearts. The New Testament is attuned to another note, the note of love: 'Though I understand all knowledge and have not love, I am nothing.' So wrote the great Apostle of the Gentiles, a man of culture, a university man, a man the broader for his twofold training, Jewish and Hellenic. Here is no depreciation of human learning, but a grave insistence on the supremacy of love in Christian thought and experience.

This conception of love is original with Christianity—the very word is new. It is never employed in Greek before the Christian era. Nor should its special meaning in New Testament literature escape us. We have to strip it of all merely earthly associations. It is nothing merely emotional, it is no more amiability than the gospel is a message of good nature. Christian love is altruistic, sympathetic, energetic. Having its source in the Holy Spirit, it is seen by its fruit. Love in speech is the desire to bless; love in action is the willingness to give. Its origin is Divine and eternal, its issues lie in fact and experience.

No wonder, therefore, if in the first ages of Christianity love was regarded as a true note of the Church. It was the binding force of the Christian society. Out of it sprang not only the desire to do good to those who were of the household of the faith, but every common gallant effort to win those who were outside it.

Now, we cannot force ourselves to love others. Artificial expressions of love are worse than valueless. But we can lend ourselves to

the gracious influence of the Divine Spirit. We can patiently imitate, though at an immeasurable distance, the pattern of Christ, strong Son of God, Immortal Love. We can gain from the channels of His grace gifts and powers as yet unknown and unexercised by us. The greatest of all such powers and gifts is the capacity of loving.

When we pass from the university to the study, or the teacher's desk, let us see if there are no opportunities of taking a fresh interest in the hospital near us, or the workhouse; in the invalid, the tired mother, the illiterate person who jars upon us in the daily round. Are we not, in our absorption in our books, sometimes in danger of neglecting their craving for our love, and in that very neglect finding our own work poorer because it is selfish?

Or, again, for those of us whose work in life is teaching: Do we regard the class before us merely as units on whom we may make the latest educational experiments? Or are they to us living souls whose life here, and in the great hereafter, is unconsciously forming under our example and influence? Does the Divine principle of love actuate us in the class-room and in the hours of common recreation? We may be delivered from favouritism, the vice of teachers as of princes, but is our eye drawn only to the apt and receptive pupil—do we not sometimes disregard the diffident, the dull, and the despondent? Then we need at once the strength and example of the Great Teacher—the Teacher of Nicodemus, of the woman of Samaria, of His own hesitating disciple, St Thomas.

¶ 'I will try,' said one of the most beautiful souls of our generation, as she faced a class of backward girls, 'to give them all that the years have brought to my own soul. God help me to give what He gave, myself, and to make that self worth something to somebody. Teach me to love all as He has loved, for the sake of the infinite possibilities locked up in every human soul.' [1]

Everywhere men are to-day seeking, feeling after God if haply they may find Him. Let it be our part to help these with any gift or power we may have. Noble as is the pursuit of knowledge, it is only when it is crowned by love that it is really fruitful in consequences, both now and in the great hereafter.

[1] W. R. Bowie, *The Inescapable Christ*, 199.

Love and Giving

1 Cor. xiii. 3.—'And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor . . . and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.'

1. THE grace of giving is a great Christian virtue. The New Testament has much to say about it. Indeed, it is not going too far to say that our Lord makes it the test of entrance into the glory and blessedness of heaven. In that great judgment-scene which we get in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew the people who are summoned to inherit the Kingdom are the people who fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick, while the people who are told to 'depart' into the outer darkness are the people who failed to discharge any of these offices of helpful ministry. We read again, in the Gospel of St Luke, that Dives lifted up his eyes, being in torment because he neglected the beggar Lazarus who lay in his sores at his very gate. And the reason for making the exercise of this grace the test of fitness for heaven is that giving springs from love; the open hand is the result of the generous heart. Love, as some one has said, is the giving impulse, and where there is no giving there is no real love. And as heaven is the abode of love, no one is fit for the Kingdom who has not the loving heart.

2. But while it is true that there is no love where there is not giving, it is on the other hand true that we may have giving without love. That is the contingency the Apostle is contemplating. He pictures a man bestowing all his goods to feed the poor. The Greek makes it plain that he doles his goods out to a large number of persons and that he doles them out with his own hand. At first sight it seems to be magnificent, sacrificial giving. But even such giving as that may count for nothing and may profit a man nothing in the sight of God, if it does not spring from real, genuine love. For, as a mere matter of fact and experience, men give from all kinds of motives. They give sometimes because it is the correct thing to give, because it is good form to have their names on certain subscription lists. They give in order to stand well with their fellows and to win their applause. We have heard in this country of ours of men giving large sums to charities and philanthropies in the hope of winning for themselves titles and

public honours. Strange and curious, and sometimes sordid, motives often prompt men to give. In their giving they are thinking not so much of the people who need help as of themselves. There were men of that type in our Lord's day. They gave their alms, He said, for to be seen of men. They got their reward in the shape of public applause. But there was nothing down to their credit in the account books of Almighty God. The motive that converts giving into a Divine grace was lacking. Their giving sprang not from love, but from a perverted selfishness. And the Apostle says much the same thing here. A man may give all his goods to the poor, but if he has not love, it profits him nothing in the sight of God.

¶ 'When I have attempted to give myself to others by services,' said Emerson, 'it proved an intellectual trick—no more. They eat your service like apples and leave you out. But love them and they feel *you*, and delight in you all the time.'

3. Love is the law of help. Sometimes philanthropy, or that which poses as such, is a substitute for sympathy. There are many who have yet to learn that it costs more than an intermittent, spasmodic dribble of sixpences to put them right with the need of the world.

¶ Says Henry Drummond, 'It is a very easy thing to toss a copper to a beggar on the street, it is generally an easier thing than not to do it. Yet Love is just as often in the withholding. We purchase relief from the sympathetic feelings roused by the spectacle of misery, at the copper's cost. It is too cheap, too cheap for us and often too dear for the beggar. If we really loved him we would either do more for him or less.'

The lesson we need to learn is not the futility of giving away *all* our possessions—a course of conduct that would not occur to many people—but the futility of giving away *any part* of them unless the gifts be symbols of brotherhood, sacraments of sympathy. We are constantly being reminded nowadays that we pauperize people by our gifts. Must we, then, let them struggle on and suffer more? Yes, very likely we must. But woe to that man who, as he puts back his gift into his purse, shuts up his sympathies in his own heart. It may be wrong to give a needy man our money, but it is a hundredfold more wrong to deny him our sympathy.

¶ Oliver Twist asking for more is, after all, something more than a shame. He is a symbol. What Oliver Twist wanted was not really more gruel, but more love. He could have lived without the one, he could hardly exist without the other. And the whole edge of the satire consists in the fact that the hungry boy is neglected by the guardians of the poor, and is punished by the relieving officers for asking to be relieved. Until, when the time comes that the Poor Law agents are preparing to launch him into a career, he can only break down and sob out that he is 'so lonely, so very lonely.' Now, against what was Dickens declaring war? Not against the thoughtless neglect of the poor, but against the heartless relief of the poor. 'The reformers,' says Mr Chesterton, 'in creating many other modern things, created a modern workhouse, and when Dickens came out to fight, it was the first thing he broke with his battle-axe.' It has been the misfortune, many people would say the mistake, of much organized charity, whether national or private, that people in great need have nearly always been repelled by its apparent and frequently real lack of love.[1]

4. But the special point the Apostle makes here is that it is only love that makes a gift of value in the sight of God. Love is the alchemy that converts our humblest gifts and ministries into Divine and heavenly graces. 'Whosoever shall give to drink a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, he shall by no means lose his reward.' It shall be set down to his credit in the great account books. But the critical words in that sentence are 'in the name of a disciple.' Out of love for Jesus and those who name the name of Jesus—that is what it means. It is the motive that determines the value of a gift. Love makes every gift and every service precious in the sight of God.

Love and Sacrifice

1 Cor. xiii. 3.—'Though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.'

1. It has been pointed out that St Paul, when he wrote these words, may have had an actual historical incident in view. Some fifty years

[1] H. C. Lees, *The Practice of the Love of Christ*, 60.

previously a deed had been done which was still talked of all over Europe. An Indian fanatic, attached to an embassy sent by King Porus to the Emperor Augustus, had astonished the Greeks and Romans by burning himself alive at Athens. His tomb, according to Plutarch, was one of the sights of the city. It bore the inscription 'Zarmanochegas, the Indian from Bargosa, who after the fashion of his Indian forefathers made himself immortal, died here.' What more likely than that Paul, whose eye had been attracted by the inscription 'To the Unknown God,' should have seen this also, and should have heard the story of the strange self-immolation which was still fresh in the minds of men?

¶ The following paragraph appeared in the British newspapers, April 1913. The Tokio *Asahi Shimbun* publishes a telegram from Taihoku, in Formosa, giving details of the suicide of ten Buddhist monks there. The monks, who had for long been suffering from religious mania and a general detestation of the world, set fire to the Sekisanryo temple, to which they were attached. When the whole building was well alight they recited certain prayers and then marched in procession into the midst of the flames. 'From their superstition,' says the paper, 'that by this death they would surely arrive in heaven, they suffered themselves to be thus burned to death, not suffering the least agony, and appearing most satisfied with the death which they had chosen.'

St Paul's devotion was unbroken; but he testified that sacrifice by itself is nothing. The sacrifice which is the imitation of Christ must be moved by love, and must seek a worthy end. 'Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not' applies to all such purposeless and theatrical displays. The great oblation which is our example as well as our propitiation was of another order.

¶ Dr Moffatt writes: 'One of the most remarkable comments upon 1 Corinthians xiii. 3 is the unconscious note furnished by the letter of the churches of Lyons and Vienne, more than a century later. In describing their martyrs during the recent persecution, they expressly connect love with no fewer than three of the most prominent in the list. The first is the young aristocrat, Vettius Epagathus, "filled with love for God and his neighbour." He had a reputation for saintliness equal to that of John the Baptist's father; the words of Luke i. 6 are applied to him. But the Church adds, he had more of the spirit than Zechariah, and "showed this by the fullness of his love in deciding willingly to lay down his life in defence of the brothers." The next example of love is the heroic slave-girl Blandina, "through whom Christ proved that what men reckon mean, obscure, and contemptible is adjudged great glory by God, on account of love to Him—love shown in its strength." Thirdly, the martyrdom of Alexander the physician is chronicled: "he was well known to almost everybody for his love to God."'

2. Why did Christ die? There is no difficulty in saying that He died for love. In this all agree. But was He the victim of His own affection? Did He begin His ministry hoping to convert His nation, and holding on through unlooked-for checks and disappointments till all the horizon was black, and He saw no honourable way out of it but dying? No; He was Victim indeed, but He was also Priest. All His life was love, but nothing took Him unawares, and He foresaw and meant His death. He was fastened to His Cross not by nails, but by ancient prophecies and mysteries of love. In dying He spoiled Death, and made a show of him triumphing openly. He offered Himself immaculate to God as the full oblation and sacrifice for the sin of the world.

But the offering was of charity. Trace the life-giving river to its fountain-head, and we see it spring in everlasting love. Though the deep human heart's first demand even in its fall is for justice; though St Paul declares that he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, because first of all it reveals the righteousness of God from faith to faith, yet it is the love of the Atonement that draws us out of the dreary years of routine and of sin, and gives us power to become true sons of God.

3. And now that we have fairly entered the political period of Christianity, whose watchword is charity, it is well to consider what self-sacrifice really is. It is not lavish giving. 'Though,' says the Apostle, 'I give all my goods to feed the poor, it profiteth me nothing.' In the war between the haves and the have-nots many will give lavishly to put off the day of reckoning. But what is surrendered from fear

is not charity. Others, again, give from a sense of duty; they understand that they ought to part with one-tenth of their incomes; perhaps there is a lurking thought somewhere that God may prosper their business if they give Him some small share, but neither duty nor calculation is love. We believe there are in the Christian Church, which to-day looks so dead, so comfortable, so utterly deaf to its call, many thousand souls of the true Israel seeking to be led from the house of bondage. But their Moses will not put giving first. Love is first—that love which can be learned nowhere but at the Cross. The gospel is the reinstatement of love, and love is maintained only by sacrifice.

¶ I have come to believe (he wrote) that if a spiritual presence can tenant a material body it is not incredible that a spiritual influence can accompany a material gift. In these realms the character of the giver determines the momentum of his gift. If there be sacrifice in the giver there will be spiritual power in the gift. I believe that all our offerings—of strength or time or money—have their virtue conditioned by the sacrifice that gave them birth. . . . We begin to operate with vital forces when we cross the border into the land of sacrifices.[1]

Neither is voluntary suffering the true self-sacrifice. Love will find the way to its own expression. There will be no need to seek occasions of sacrifice. If we but look where next to plant our foot, we shall in due time discover all the length and all the winding of the way. We shall not need to imitate the Roman Catholic preacher each of whose brilliant sermons was followed by severe self-flagellation. There has hardly ever been a time when moral courage was more rare. There was never more need of men who will

> Take open, actual part
> With right, maintain
> Pure truth. . . .
> Vexed always, wounded oft.

We find leaders of the Christian Churches excusing themselves from touching the vital problems of theology and society; silent when they see wrong and falsehood; cynical critics of those who dare; giving themselves as tools to the dominant party; condoning the treachery of their own partisans. Noble causes are languishing, public lying on the great scale is corrupting the heart of politics, enormous wrongs are being perpetuated in the face of men who knew the truth, but have waited for a convenient season till the man is dead within them.

> God send us men whose aim will be,
> Not to defend some worn-out creed,
> But to live out the laws of Christ
> In every thought, and word and deed.
>
> God send us men alert and quick
> His lofty precepts to translate,
> Until the laws of Christ become
> The laws and habits of the State.
>
> God send us men! God send us men!
> Patient, courageous, strong, and true,
> With vision clear and mind equipped,
> His will to learn, His work to do.
>
> God send us men with hearts ablaze,
> All truth to love, all wrong to hate;
> These are the patriots nations need,
> These are the bulwarks of the State.[1]

4. We shall thus come to understand the life of St Paul in its sweetness, in its greatness, in its pain—the life of constant suffering and constant triumph, the life that ever heard and never left unheeded the call to bonds and afflictions, the life that did not hurry to useless pains and unasked renunciations, the life that loved and was loved back, the life of a surrender that smoked day and night like the perfumes on the altar.

But pain and sacrifice have their term. They that love righteousness and hate iniquity may indeed die in exile, but they are none the less anointed with the oil of gladness above their fellows. They are the partakers and the heirs of the Divine joy. Sorrow came with sin, and departs with sin. The idea of the perpetuation of sacrifice is purely pagan. The expression of love is not self-sacrifice but love, and all eternity will be its utterance.

[1] A. Porritt, *J. H. Jowett*, 82.

[1] F. J. Gillman.

The Patience of Love

1 Cor. xiii. 4.—'Love suffereth long.'

In the first three verses of this chapter Paul wellnigh exhausts language in setting forth the excellence of love. Indeed, he does more than assert its supremacy, he declares that it is love that gives every other gift its value. Love is the one thing needful. It is of vital importance, then, that we should examine ourselves and see whether we really possess this supreme and indispensable grace. We can discover whether we possess it or not by turning the searchlight on to our lives and characters to see whether they bear the 'marks' of love. 'From henceforth let no man trouble me,' said the Apostle—having in mind some men who challenged and disputed his Christian standing—'for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus.' The 'marks of Jesus' in Paul's case were the scars left on his face and head where the cruel stones had cut him, and the weals on his back where the strokes of the lash had fallen. He had borne these things out of devotion to his Lord. They were the brand of Jesus upon him. And these things which the Apostle now proceeds to name are the 'marks' of love, the signs of its presence. We can say we have love only as we possess these marks. And the first mark which the Apostle mentions is the patience of love.

1. 'Love suffereth long.' This is how love behaves in face of injuries and wrongs. It does not change to wrath and bitterness. It persists in loving. It does not break off relations: it holds on and loves on. The primal love of all, of which all other love is born, is the love of God. Love approaches perfection as it approximates to that, and one of the characteristics of the love of God is—it suffereth long. The Old Testament proclaims the truth. Across its pages we see written the words, 'love suffereth long.' The Old Testament is practically the story of God's dealings with Israel. What infinite patience He showed! For Israel was constantly forgetting Him, rebelling against Him, breaking His covenant, betaking himself to the worship of false gods. And yet God's love persisted and loved on. 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?' 'Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget, yet will not I forget thee.' He forgave and forgave and forgave this rebellious and wayward people. He did not cast them off. God's love 'suffered long.'

2. But it is in the New Testament, in the story of His Son Jesus, that this quality in God's love shines out upon us in its wondrous and ineffable glory. In Jesus we see the love that 'suffereth long.' Think of His dealings with those whom He called 'friends.' What blundering men those first disciples of His were! How they misunderstood Him! And how they must have grieved His heart! They conspired with the multitude to make Him an earthly King. James and John wanted to call down fire from heaven to destroy a Samaritan village! Peter took Him and rebuked Him because He dared even to hint at death! And yet Jesus bore with them. He did not wax impatient with them. Having loved His own He loved them even unto the end. His love survived even Peter's desertion and denial. 'Go, tell His disciples *and Peter*' was the command given to the women on the first Easter morning. Think of His dealings with the people in general. He came unto His own and His own people received Him not. When Jesus discovered that rejection was going to be His lot, it would have been very human if He had shaken the dust of earth off His feet and had returned to the glory from which He had come; but so wonderful was His love for men that He loved on in spite of rejection and scorn, in spite of the Cross and the grave. He bore them all for love.

3. We need not go back to the New Testament to find proof and illustration that the love of Christ suffers long. We are ourselves the living evidences and monuments of it. For we are where we are—on praying terms and with the hope of heaven in our souls—simply because the love of Christ suffers long. If He had been swift to mark iniquity, which of us should stand? Every day and many a time in the day we do things that grieve Him, and yet He has not cast us off. When friends despair of us, His love pursues us still. Indeed, Peter says that it is the long-suffering of the Lord which is our salvation. That really is a bit of autobiography. Peter was writing out of his own experience

when he penned that sentence. He had asked his Master one day, 'Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?' And no doubt when he suggested seven times he thought he was making a most generous offer. But Jesus said to him, 'I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven.' Seventy times seven! Forgiveness without limit! And Peter came to need it all. He knew he was a saved man simply because of Christ's limitless forgiveness, the boundless patience of His love. And this is his confession, 'The long-suffering of the Lord is salvation.' And that is not Peter's confession only; it is our confession too, if we are serious men and women. It is a day of mercy and grace with us still, simply because our Lord's love suffers long. He forgives until seventy times seven. As our hymn expresses it, 'Unwearied in forgiveness still, Thy heart could only love.'

¶ Tertullian, human, petulant, irascible, stared wonderingly at Jesus Christ. They should have known that He was God, he said at last; they should have seen it clearly in His patience, a saying which makes clear what picture of God his own life had drawn for him. And has not our life drawn it too? As Attar put it long ago, so have we found:

For like a child, sent with a fluttering light,
To feel his way along a gusty night,
Man walks the world; again, and yet again;
The lamp shall be by fits of passion slain;
But shall not He who sent Him from the Door
Relight the lamp once more, and yet once more? [1]

This is a mark of love in man as well as in God; it suffers long. It is infinitely patient—even under wrongs and insults and injuries. We see that Divine quality in the love parents have for wayward rebellious children.

¶ There came to my office one day an old lady with white hair, starved features, and tottering steps, leaning upon a cane. There was a scared, timid look on her careworn face as she sank heavily into a chair and told me her pathetic story. It was very simple. An utterly debauched and worthless son, who for thirty years had brought nothing but sorrow to the heart of his mother, had been arrested for an assault from which his victim had died. He was lying in jail awaiting trial. The bruised heart of the aged mother yearned for her boy, for he was still a boy to her. In a moment of indignation at what seemed to me outraged affection, I asked, 'Why do you not leave him alone? He does not care for you.' Her eyes filled afresh with tears, her head sank lower, as she answered with infinite tenderness, 'No, I know he does not care for me, but I care for him, and he cannot have a mother long.' [1]

4. Let us search and try our hearts to see if we have *love*—for this is one of the marks of love: it 'suffers long.' We have all of us folk who have grieved us and offended us. What have we done with them? Broken off relations with them? Allowed love to change into contempt and dislike? But the very mark of love is that it is infinitely patient, it endures and persists.

While all Christian people need this patient love, the Christian worker needs it in a special degree. Of course, he will not enter upon Christian work at all unless love inspires him, love for the Master and love for the people he seeks to serve. But if he is to do any good, his love must be a patient and enduring love.

¶ In one of Mr Kipling's finest stories, *The Bridge Builders*, he describes a flood that came suddenly raging down the Ganges just when a great feat of engineering was nearing its completion. He pictures vividly the feverish anxiety of the constructor, through the long hours. Will the bridge stand? This is its test and his. All his calculations and endeavours and hardships are at stake. Are they to go for nothing? If the bridge fails, he has failed. But it comes forth from its test triumphantly. The flood dies down, the bridge lives on.[2]

No man need volunteer for the Foreign Mission field unless he has the love which suffers long—a love which persists in spite of the grossness and vileness of those amongst whom he labours, and the lapses and falls of those who have made profession of conversion. If a man gets angry and impatient when a convert goes astray, if he casts such an one off in despair, he had better remain at home. The mission field needs the love that 'suffers long.' And so in only lesser degree does Christian work at

[1] A. J. Gossip, *The Galilean Accent*, 59.

[1] G. L. Perin, in *Good Tidings*, 139.
[2] H. C. Lees, *The Practice of the Love of Christ*, 80.

home. The minister needs it, for results are slow in coming and men and women often sorely disappoint him. The teacher in the school needs it with a class of noisy boys or girls; if he gets impatient or loses his interest because the behaviour of the children is trying and results are disappointing, he is not going to be of very much use. In all our Christian work, in our attitude towards this world of sinning men and women, we need the love that 'suffers long.' Have we got this 'love' that reveals itself in the 'patience which cannot know defeat' and the 'pity which will not be denied?'

The Kindness of Love

1 Cor. xiii. 4.—'Love suffereth long and is kind.'

1. The second mark of love is this—*it is 'kind.'* These two first marks of love—patience and kindness—are like the obverse and reverse of the same coin. The one is the passive and the other the active aspect of love. There is a great positive purpose in the longsuffering of love. 'Love suffereth long and is kind.' It is not a question of unlimited passive capability. Love is not love because it suffers long. It is love because in its suffering it is kind. We must linger on this word for a moment. It has so many shades of meaning. It is put to so many trivial uses. In the vocabulary of convention it often means very little. In this hymn it means so much. It is raised to its highest power. It means to be wholly disposed to place oneself at the service of others.

¶ 'Service,' said Diana Warwick, 'is our destiny in life and death. Then let it be my choice, living to serve the living, and be fretted uncomplainingly.'

There was all the passive patience and endurance of love in the life of our Lord. But there was the positive side also. His love ran out in ceaseless beneficence. He did kindnesses. He was always doing them. He never did anything else. Think of Him at the marriage feast at Cana! That wine should run short on such an occasion would have covered the bridegroom with shame. And so, to prevent any shadow falling upon the feast, Jesus turned the water into wine. It was the sheer kindness of love. Or think of that other day when He was again approaching Cana and just outside the gates He met a little funeral—the funeral of an only son. Unasked, Jesus stopped the procession and bade the dead man arise. 'And he gave him to his mother.' It was love expressing itself in sheer kindness. Or think of Him in that desert place with that crowd of over five thousand hanging upon His lips. And lest out of sheer weariness any of them should faint by the way, He himself out there in the wilderness provided them with a full table. It was the love of His soul. Or think of Him in that last dread scene when He hung upon the Cross in mortal pain, forgetting all about His own agony that He might comfort the dying robber, who had cried to Him in a penitence that was wellnigh despair. 'To-day,' said He, 'thou shalt be with me in paradise.' Love in the case of Jesus not only 'suffered long,' but it was 'kind.'

2. In our attempts to make Christ manifest, to explain Him to men, do we dwell sufficiently upon the attractiveness of His character? His own words are, 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.' One application of this saying is surely this, that we must lift up, we must exalt, Christ and make Him manifest to men, so that they may see Him—the Divinely appointed King or Ruler of men—'in His beauty.' Again, are we sufficiently careful to attract men to Him by expressing His virtues in our own conduct? Is Christ manifest to others, because expressed in us? Is He, because lifted up in our hearts and seated there as a King upon His throne, also lifted up in our lives? And is this virtue of kindness prominent among the Christian virtues expressed in our conduct towards others? Do we attract others to ourselves, and through us to Christ, by the kindness of our behaviour towards them?

¶ The Greek word for kind is *chrestos*. The Latinized form of the derivative from this word for 'the kind people' is *chrestiani*, which might equally well describe the followers of one *Chrestos*—'the kind one.' Tertullian, the old African father who wrote in Latin, tells us that in his day among the heathen *Christus* became *Chrestos*, and *christiani*, *chrestiani*, so characteristic a feature of the character of the Christians was this virtue of kindness.[1]

¶ I believe almost anyone who has lived with the very poor will agree with me when I

[1] W. E. Chadwick, *Through Discipline to Victory*, 87.

say that their chief virtue, the one they admire and practise most, is kindness. I remember when that terrible explosion took place during the War in Silvertown. The people at Toynbee Hall, which had at that time a branch in Poplar —nearer to Silvertown than Whitechapel— were given the duty of housing those who were left without homes, and Mr Heath, then Warden of Toynbee Hall, told me many women came whose children had only two changes of clothes, and gave one of them, because they did not feel they could possibly keep two sets of clothing when some children had none at all.[1]

It would be well if there were a more intimate connection between the profession of Christianity and the practice of kindness to-day. But kindness, especially when it describes the way or method in which actions are performed, does not by any means always come by nature. Much more often we shall find that it is acquired by a long practice of self-control and self-discipline. It must be in the heart—its root, of course, is love—but it is quite possible, from want of careful control over our manner, to do a kindly meant action in an unkindly way, and, without any intention of doing so, to hurt the tender feelings of those whom we really wish to help. Let us take care before we act to put ourselves in the place of others and ask ourselves how, in the circumstances, we would be treated. But to do this, self-discipline, again, is needed. Yet until we can feel *with*, as standing beside, or rather as united in spirit to, those we would help, instead of being content to feel *for* them (as an outsider), we shall never learn to practise this great virtue so especially characteristic of our Master.

¶ Charles Lamb counselled his readers to 'get the writings of John Woolman by heart.' Here is a passage from the Journal of that New Jersey Quaker, written about 1740, when he was quite a young man: 'I looked upon the works of God in His visible creation and an awfulness covered me; my heart was tender and often contrite, and universal love to my fellow-creatures increased in me: this will be understood by such who have trodden in the same path.' He describes further how in the closing months of his life he crossed the ocean to London in a small sailing vessel. From scruples of conscience he would not accept the cabin comforts which his friends offered him, but endured five weeks in the steerage instead. All through the voyage the Journal reveals how his whole soul was brimming over with affection and compassion for the rough sailors among whom he lived, how tenderly and pitifully he entered into their hardships and their temptations. On that Atlantic passage assuredly they had Love on board as a messmate in the person of John Woolman.[1]

Be useful where thou livest, that they may
Both want and wish thy pleasing presence still.
Kindnesse, good parts, great places, are the way
To compasse this. Finde out men's wants and will,
And meet them there. All worldly joyes go lesse
To the one joy of doing kindnesses.[2]

[1] A. Maude Royden, *The Friendship of God*, 140.

Love and Envy

1 Cor. xiii. 4.—'Love envieth not.'

The sin of envy must have been much in the mind of the Apostle Paul. For was it not this very sin that was causing all the divisions and distractions in the Church at Corinth? They were each striving for pre-eminence and each jealous of the other's 'gifts.' The Apostle knows that the only cure for such a state of things is the 'love that envieth not.'

Thomas Aquinas defines envy as 'sadness at another's good.' It is grief or displeasure at the good of another—the good consisting of wealth or fame, or any other possession which men prize. And it is only the reverse side of the medal if we feel delight and exultation in another's evil—in his failure or ill success, or any other kind of calamity. It should be carefully distinguished from emulation, which is frequently confounded with envy, but is, in fact, quite different. Emulation is also excited by a neighbour's good; but the effect is not the same—envy produces a sense of depression and despair, but emulation produces feelings of admiration and imitation. Emulation may, indeed, desire to excel the virtue or ability which it copies but it does so not for the sake of outstripping a rival, but in the sheer

[1] T. H. Darlow, *The Love of God*, 106.
[2] Herbert.

desire for excellence. It must be distinguished too from honourable ambition. Strange indeed is the man who has no honest spirit of ambition to 'covet earnestly the best gifts.'

Aspire, break bounds,
Endeavour to be good
And better still and best!
Success is nought,
Endeavour's all!

Upon a monument to an Alpine guide who perished in a crevasse are the simple words: 'He died climbing.' No worthier tribute could be paid to any soul at last. Without the sheer love of excellence for its own sake, and something of that 'divine dissatisfaction' which is the mainspring of progress in every sphere, character is sadly incomplete.[1]

¶ In an old castle in the heart of Germany, celebrated for its picturesque situation and its noble proportions, and rendered famous by the fact that Martin Luther spent in it one of the most eventful years of his life, there is a wonderful series of proverbs painted on the walls, one of which runs as follows:

I love a thing that's fine
Ev'n when it is not mine,
And, though it never mine can be,
Yet it delights and gladdens me.[2]

In history, envy has been the cause of some of the greatest crimes. The second notable sin of the world—the murder of Abel—was caused by this base passion. Cain could not bear that there should be anyone more acceptable to God than himself. And may we not say that a great many of the persecutions and martyrdoms suffered by the people of God in every age have been due to the same cause—to the spite of the wicked at the existence of those whom they have secretly felt to be better than themselves?

In everyday life the sin of envy is miserably common. Disparaging remarks are often astutely introduced into people's ordinary talk. Gossips cannot but admit the brilliance or the benevolence of the person they are criticizing, but—— Oh, with how many of these envious 'buts' is conversation garnished. Those who make use of them not infrequently claim for themselves, as they do so, the character of virtue: they are sorry they have to say what is about to follow; really it gives them pain to have to reveal it; but truth compels. Yet they have been working up to it all the time: they have only laid on the praise that they might the more effectively introduce the exception which was to cancel all.

¶ This day twenty years ago, I preached for the first time as an ordained minister. It is amazing that the Lord has spared me and used me at all. . . . Yet envy is my hurt, and to-day I have been seeking grace to rejoice exceedingly over the usefulness of others, even where it casts me into the shade. . . . Lord, give more and more to those brethren whom I have despised.[1]

How is it that we can be so petty and so false? Why should the good of another make us jealous? It may be that our life has been a hard one, as we think. We see people round about us who seem to have no cares; certainly they have not our cares, and we blame them, because they have not been called upon to undergo our particular discipline. We find ourselves almost wishing that they might be called upon to suffer what we are suffering, to taste life as we know it. Or it may be that our religious life is a burdensome and morose one. This may be due to our temperament or it may be a consequence of our earlier life having been self-indulgent and disorderly. Or it may be that we inherit a kind of shadow in our blood which makes our battle a peculiarly lonely one. That being our condition we look abroad upon the world of men. We see those who claim to share our faith. They trust the Same Love and look for Salvation to the Same Cross. But how much happier they are than we. Envy takes possession of us, and we find ourselves expecting them to break down, to fall away, because we think they are too happy-hearted to have entered by the strait gate or built their spiritual life upon the Rock.[2]

Whatever form envy takes it is its own punishment. What can cause more misery in the man who indulges it? What this sin may grow into we may understand by an allegory. Upon the wall of a chapel at Padua there is a suggestive figure of Envy painted by Giotto,

[1] N. M. Caie, *The Mount of Expiation*, 23.
[2] J. Stalker, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, 71.

[1] Andrew Bonar.
[2] J. A. Hutton, *At Close Quarters*, 33.

Dante's friend. The figure is given long ears to catch every breath of rumour and scandal which might hurt a neighbour, and a serpent tongue to poison his reputation. Then the tongue coils back to sting the eyes of the figure herself. This last detail conveys the deepest hint of all. Envy is blind. On the terrace of envy, Dante's pilgrims observe that the eyes of every penitent are sewn up with wire. But the coiling back of the serpent's tongue to sting the figure's eyes suggests that envy is really blinded by herself. Jealousy regarding others inexorably reacts to embitter the heart out of which it comes.

> Everywhere the light and shade
> By the gazer's eye is made.[1]

What, then, is the cure for envy? It is this —Have love in the heart. There lies the sole cure for envy—in the grace of generous, brotherly love. No quality of heart is so charming, so entirely Christian. We have the mind of Christ when we can be honestly happy in the happiness and success of our fellows. No gladness is so Divine as the gladness of this all-generous sympathy. God's own beatitude is His delight in the beatitude of His children. As we become partakers of His nature, we grow self-forgetful enough to exult in the joy of others round us, and we discover in this the inward secret of happiness and content.

¶ When the poems of Lord Byron first appeared, an anonymous reviewer enthusiastically praised them, and declared that in the presence of such products of genius Sir Walter Scott could no longer be considered the leading poet of his day. It was afterwards discovered that the anonymous reviewer was Sir Walter himself!

Let us ask ourselves when we feel the spirit of envy entering into our most sacred service whether we are grudging that our God should be glorified by powers superior to our own? Would we impoverish the cause of progress or of the gospel by restricting it to the support of those inferior to ourselves? We cannot love the good cause very passionately if we do not welcome every talent consecrated to its service. And, if we can take pleasure in the work and prosperity of the good man, is our temptation, like the Psalmist's, to envy the prosperity of the wicked? Are we, then, content to pay the moral price which he pays for success? How can we be disappointed or envious if our mercies include the great salvation and if we have within us the hope of immortality? If we only realized how much we possess when we possess Christ, our mouth would be filled with laughter and our tongue with praise, and, catching the spirit of the Saviour, we should be able to rejoice with them who do rejoice and to weep with them who weep; and this is the final victory over envy.[1]

[1] N. M. Caie.

Love and Pride

1 Cor. xiii. 4.—'Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.'

THESE two qualities of love are closely related to each other. 'Is not puffed up' refers to inward disposition; 'vaunteth not itself' refers to outward conduct and behaviour. It is because men are puffed up that they vaunt themselves. The Apostle here again is thinking of the Corinthian Church and its disputations and quarrelsome members. Each was 'puffed up' with a sense of the importance of his gift, and vaunted himself over his neighbour who had another and different kind of gift. And the self-importance and the boasting led to friction and strife. The cure for that, according to the Apostle, is love. For the mark of love is a beautiful modesty and humility.

1. Why does a man puff himself up and vaunt himself? To demonstrate his own greatness, and especially to prove his superiority to his neighbour. But love never seeks to assert its superiority, love ever seeks to serve. The man in whose heart love burns never seeks to be first, he aspires rather to be the servant of all. Recall, for example, some of the characteristics of Him who was love incarnate. He did great deeds of mercy; but He never advertised Himself. When He had healed the leper He gave him instructions to tell no man. Jesus did not parade His goodness. He did not vaunt Himself. He was satisfied just to serve the sick and the afflicted. 'He would that no man should know it.' There are some who will not

[1] J. Stalker.

take part in any philanthropic movement unless they are given the first place, unless their names are trumpeted abroad. But that is not the temper of love. Love cares nothing for its own reputation so long as it can serve. Think again of Jesus on 'that dark betrayal night.' On their way to the Upper Room the disciples had been disputing as to which of them was greatest. Each had been emphasizing his own claims to the highest place. And the result was that when they came to the Supper Room and took their seats, no one would stoop to the humble but grateful task of foot-washing. None of them would act as servant to the rest. So Jesus Himself riseth from supper and laying aside His garments, He took a towel and girded Himself; then He poureth water into the basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded. In that deed of our Lord's we see love in action. He, the Greatest, stooped to the lowliest service. And thereby He revealed the true nature of Love.

Where true Christian love reigns it will not be ashamed to come down, even to undergo humiliation, indignity, and sacrifice, as the Master did. It will wrestle with pride, plead with it, shed tears of sorrowful tenderness that it may reach its object. And it will come down also to the children of the slums, the heirs of poverty and despair, living and breathing the atmosphere of vice, degradation, and intemperance. If our Lord could bend from the throne of the universe so far as to wash the feet of a Judas, we may well gird ourselves for meek and lowly service to the tempted, the outcast, the fallen. The person who shall have the highest place in heaven will be the one who shall have stooped from the greatest height to the lowest depth, in order to serve men by love. And all names will follow in order on that principle. It is indeed a blessed thing when love stoops to help and save.

¶ The most touching thing in connection with Lord Shaftesbury's death was the grief shown by his ragged friends. Two poorly-clad boys, children of the city's darkness, were gazing at a news' bill on the morning of his death. The one anxiously said to the other, 'That's not *our* Lord Shaftesbury?' 'Yes,' replied the other, 'it's *our* Lord Shaftesbury.' Why could they speak of the beneficent man in such familiar terms? Because he had come down to them in love, and associated himself with their lowly circumstances.[1]

Jesus who deem'dst it not unmeet
To wash Thine own disciples' feet
Though Thou wert Lord of all:
Teach me thereby this wisdom meet,
That they who self-abasement seek,
Alone shall fear no fall.[2]

2. There is another reason why love vaunts not itself and is not puffed up. The love of which Paul here speaks looks up to God as well as looks out to man. And the love that has once looked up to God knows that it has nothing of which to boast itself. The love which is begotten of God knows 'that there is nothing to justify one swelling thought of pride.' 'We love,' says St John, 'because he first loved us.' And He loved us not because we deserved it; He loved us in spite of our ill deserts. 'While we were yet sinners Christ died.' And He continues to love us still in spite of folly, and perversity, and sin. It is free, unmerited, undeserved love—the love which God bestows upon us. And the love we give is but a poor and unworthy return. Love is never in any mood to boast, for it knows that its own acceptance is all of grace. It never boasts of its gifts and services. It knows that the best it can do is not to be mentioned alongside that mighty love which for our sakes bore the Cross.

Envy and pride—these are the two most prolific causes of the world's misery and woe. Love, real love, would banish them both. And love is the mark of the Christian. Do we bear this mark? 'Love envieth not, love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.' Are we free from envy, free from pride? How love of this kind would sweeten the world! Envy! that is the feeling that the lesser cherishes towards the greater. Pride—that is the attitude the greater assumes towards the lesser! Perhaps if there were no pride on the one side, there would not be so much envy on the other! It is superciliousness and the attitude of superiority that irritate and anger. Perhaps if those of us who are better off had the love that vaunteth not itself—is not puffed up—those less well off would have the love that envieth not.

[1] J. W. Jack, *After His Likeness*, 17.
[2] Faber.

¶ 'Look at these people,' said Matthew Arnold, referring to the middle classes, 'look at the clothes they wear, the books they read, the texture of mind which composes their thoughts. Would any amount of money compensate for being like one of them?' The superciliousness of which this is a perfect illustration is commended by Aristotle in his 'Ethics.' The name he gives it is *megalopsuchia*—sense of superiority. There is nothing more utterly opposed to the teaching of Christ.[1]

In Dante's *Divine Comedy* those denizens of Purgatory who are being cleansed from the sin of pride are represented as walking over a marble path on which, like the words or figures on a flat tombstone, are carved pictures of notable historical instances of humility. By looking on these they are unlearning their arrogance. We need not wait for the next world, or any fancied scene of purification there, to put this into practice. Look at a figure like Moses in the Old Testament, who was 'meek above all men which were upon the face of the earth'; or the Virgin Mary in the New, coming with her humble offering of two pigeons to the altar of the Lord; or look at John Knox, fleeing to hide himself when called upon to preach for the first time; or the late Dr Cairns, whose friends discovered only after he was dead that he had been offered the principalship of Edinburgh University—look on men and women like these and learn how poor and false is the glare in which pride makes gifts to shine, in comparison with the gracious light with which they are invested by humility. But look, above all, to Him, who said, 'I am meek and lowly in heart.' His entire history is one continuous lesson of humility; for 'though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich.' Who can stand beside His cradle and still be proud? Who can stand beside the Carpenter of Nazareth and still be proud? Who can stand beside the Friend of publicans and sinners and still be proud? Who can stand beside the Cross and still be proud? 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.'[2]

[1] J. Burns.
[2] J. Stalker, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, 16.

Love and the Fitness of Things

1 Cor. xiii. 5.—'Love doth not behave itself unseemly.'

One might think for a moment that the Apostle in these words is handling his great theme with a lighter and more superficial touch. Many of the ideas that commonly gather round the word 'seemliness' are such as might lead one to suppose that the writer here, in his phrase concerning love's seemly behaviour, is straying from the essentials. Seemliness suggests the ideas of tact and delicacy, judgment and propriety. It stands in the minds of many not so much for right itself as for a way of being right and doing right. We might call it the etiquette of the Christian life, useful and desirable but not essential. But just as in daily fellowship there is an unwritten etiquette that is part of the sacrament of unselfishness, so there is a seemliness of outward life that is born of the highest and the holiest things. There is a seemliness that is own brother to righteousness and mercy. That is the seemliness of love.

There is another seemliness which is secured by a tactful but immoral acceptance of things as we find them. 'When in Rome do as Rome does.' If we follow that dictum we shall achieve some degree of seemliness—in Rome. Seemliness in this weak and convenient interpretation of the word is a cloak for half the sin of the world. The thing that is seemly is the thing that is right. That is the philosophy of the easy-going and the self-indulgent and the morally timorous ones. But love says, the thing that is right is the thing that is seemly.

Let us see how, in the strong grip of Christian thought, the idea of seemliness, so weak and wavering, so colourless and plastic, becomes invested with clear and lofty and positive meaning.

1. 'Love doth not behave itself unseemly.' There is a wondrous subtlety of feeling and delicacy of touch with love. It seeks the best in the best way. We ought not to separate between the fashion of life and the spirit of it, and to say of a man who continually does ill that he means well. Love never makes a mistake. Love never blunders in its treatment of others. Love is never tactless. It is the

incompleteness of our love to God and man, it is the partial nature of the Divine indwelling, that admits of these things in the daily fellowship. There is a kind of tact which, if a man possess it, will smooth and simplify his daily communion with men, but the absence of which will not imperil his immortal soul. A man may be a good Christian and a poor courtier. But some folk make too much of that fact. They seem to reverse the argument and say that the less a man's courtesy the greater his Christianity. Brusquerie passes for honesty. Sometimes a man delivers his soul, and in so doing bruises his brother's soul, or brings it into the bondage of a bitter memory. There is much unseemliness in life that can scarcely in itself be indicted as an offence against the moral law, but which stands for something other than the best. So often we do good badly. We blunder and stumble along in the right direction. We practise one virtue at the expense of another. Our honesty flouts our charity. Our candour outstrips our sympathy. And out of all such happenings there comes into our life the unseemly thing.

These clumsy feet, still in the mire,
Go crushing blossoms without end;
These hard, well-meaning hands we thrust
Among the heart-strings of a friend.

The ill-timed truth we might have kept—
Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung?
The word we had not sense to say—
Who knows how grandly it had rung?

Unseemliness is often the result of a want of balance in our inner life. We need something to co-ordinate for us all the forms of good and all the forces of right. And only love is equal to that task. Love is perfect good in perfect touch with life. It is the deep secret of the eternal best not only enlightening a man's mind but controlling his action. We sometimes think that winsomeness is an accident of temperament. In its most shallow and least valuable forms perhaps it is. But love that is man's true life develops within him and confers upon him powers of insight and feeling, and sure instincts that teach him to utter the truth wisely and to do good in the best way. Thus love and seemliness are inseparable things.

How reverent in our midst she stood,
Or knelt in grateful praise!
What grace of Christian womanhood
Was in her household ways!

For still her holy living meant
No duty left undone;
The heavenly and the human blent
Their kindred loves in one.

And if her life small leisure found
For feasting ear and eye,
And Pleasure, on her daily round,
She passed unpausing by,

Yet with her went a secret sense
Of all things sweet and fair,
And Beauty's gracious providence
Refreshed her unaware.

She kept her line of rectitude
With love's unconscious ease;
Her kindly instincts understood
All gentle courtesies.

An inborn charm of graciousness
Made sweet her smile and tone,
And glorified her farm-wife dress
With beauty not its own.[1]

2. We cannot afford, then, to look with comparative complacence or indifference upon these errors of judgment or conduct that so often are associated with our endeavours after the service of God and our brother. Love has no unloveliness. And since there are so many unlovely things in the fashion of our daily service, we must confess that we do not know love yet as we should know it, that we do not love yet as we ought to love. Though it is true that love is first of all and always in the eternal fitness of things, that it is in perfect harmony with all the wide, pure laws of the Divinity men worship and the sanctity they seek, it is equally true that love must have a peculiar fitness to deal successfully with all the difficult conditions of life and work that obtain in the world. It must be able to bear itself fitly and seemly day by day.

There is a spiritual dignity that is part of the manifestation of them that walk in love. It is not a matter for self-satisfaction, much less is

[1] Whittier, *The Friend's Burial.*

it a matter for boasting, that, having right principles in our lives, we leave those principles to express themselves as they will. There are doubtless many ways of seeking the right and of doing it. But for each of us each hour there is but one best way; and it is because, whilst holding to the principle, we so often miss the best way of obeying it that our lives are so often ungracious and even ineffective. All is not harmony in the communion of saints. That is because the saints are imperfect, we say. But how great a measure of that imperfection is covered by the word unseemliness! Selfishness and pride do not possess a monopoly of the things that deal pain and hurt in men's lives. There is so much awkward piety, so much blundering good-will, so much unlovely religion. And they whose lives are on this wise need to be looking more deeply into their own hearts. For fault in the fashion of life springs from fault in the spirit of it. At the heart of true religion there is love—love that doth not behave itself unseemly; and if we lack that which is most meet in facing any of life's simple occasions, it is because there is some part of love's secret not yet revealed to us.

¶ Lord, let me be ever courteous and easie to be entreated; never let me fall into a peevish or contentious Spirit, but follow Peace with all Men, offering forgiveness, inviting them by Courtesies, ready to confess my own Errors, apt to make amends and desirous to be reconcil'd.[1]

Love and Unselfishness

1 Cor. xiii. 5.—'Love seeketh not her own.'

'Love seeketh not her own.' And yet it is a very natural thing to seek your own. 'If you do not do it yourself, no one else will do it for you,' cries Mr Worldly Wiseman. 'You were always driving and riving and shouldering and pressing,' says Sydney Carton to Mr Stryver in the *Tale of Two Cities*—Stryver, the man who 'went up Fleet-street bursting in his full-blown way along the pavement, to the jostlement of all weaker people.' It is so natural to seek your own that an early scribe, in copying this chapter, paused in astonishment at this sentence and inserted a 'not.' He felt sure that there was a mistake somewhere: the text ought to say, 'Love does not seek what is *not* her own.' And there it may be seen in the Vatican Library to this day, a tribute to the dullness of the natural man in spiritual things.

¶ Sir Walter Raleigh, says Froude in his *English Seamen*, 'was engaged in a hundred schemes at once, and in every one of them there was always some taint of self, some personal ambition or private object to be gained.'[1]

Love lives not to get but to give. All love is of God, the Apostle says. The love of God is the original primal love of which our human love is born. Just as all the various forms of light that we enjoy have been kindled at the central fires of the sun, so every one that loveth is born of God. God's love is the original love, and if we want to know what love is like, we must see it in God. And this is the kind of love we see—a love that seeketh not its own. God has been seeking man, giving Himself to man from the beginning of time. God is love, and just because He is love He could not live in the enjoyment of a selfish glory. God seeks not His own glory, but our good. When man went astray God did not cast him adrift and cut off all communication between this world and His heaven. He went after this sinning, perverse and rebellious child of His. He sacrificed Himself in order to find and save him. 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.'

When we turn our gaze from the father to the Son, it is the same quality of love that we see—a love that never sought its own, a love that gave itself and squandered itself and sacrificed itself to the uttermost. From start to finish Jesus' life is an illustration and example of unselfish love. We might write that sentence over the manger at Bethlehem, 'Love seeketh not her own,' for it was to save us the Eternal Son took flesh, and in order to do that He had to empty Himself. We might write it across the story of His earthly ministry, for He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows: He lived not to be ministered unto but to minister. He sought not His own ease or comfort. He sought only to help and heal, and we might write this word upon the Cross on which He died. 'He saved others,' said the mocking spectators, 'Himself He cannot save.' And they spoke better than they knew. He couldn't

[1] Thomas à Kempis.

[1] *The Expositor*, Oct. 1925.

save Himself because He was intent on saving others. It was not the ropes and nails that kept Him hanging on that Cross. There were not nails and ropes enough in Jerusalem to keep Him there had He wished to come down. He could have summoned legions of angels to His help if He had wished to escape out of the hands of His foes. But His love kept Him there—that mighty love that never sought its own.

Love claims no rights except where moral principle is involved. Then it is adamant. There is a quaint, grey monument in the sweet old town of Appleby, which was built in the days of the Puritans, and on which these words are inscribed: 'Maintain your loyalty; preserve your rights.' Maintain your rights! Aye, but they were the crown rights of manhood, freedom to oppose iniquity, freedom to worship God, and the very love in the hearts of those strong old Puritans made them claim the rights, and support their claim by death. There are rights which true love will never relinquish. It will always seek its own. On the other hand, there are rights which love is ever prepared to yield to others. If love had a right to the uppermost seat at a feast, and somebody else has got it, love would seek not its own, but would gracefully insist on the rights of the other. If love had a sitting in the Church of Christ, and came and found that someone else was seated there, love would not behave itself unseemly; love would seek not its own, but would cheerfully seek a seat elsewhere. Is not this the way of love? Would not this be the way of Christ? How many opportunities there are, in the whole round of life, where love might graciously abdicate its own rights for the comfort and interest of others.[1]

¶ There is a charming story told of the great painter Turner, that on one occasion at the exhibition in the Academy of 1826 a glorious sunset study of his completely eclipsed two portraits in the near neighbourhood. A friend found Turner rubbing a wash of lamp-black all over his own painting to reduce its flaming effects. In reply to his friend's amazement he said, 'It will all wash off afterwards—poor Lawrence felt so unhappy.'[2]

We can see the love that seeketh not its own in the missionary regardless of comfort or health or money, labouring to uplift and save some sunken and degraded people: we can see it in the Salvation Sister living only to minister to people in their poverty and sin: we can see it in many a layman who lives not for what he can get but for what he can do. But what about us? Have we got this love? For he that loveth not knoweth not God. There is no real kinship between the selfish man and the God who for love's sake gave His Son.

> Love seeketh not itself to please,
> Nor for itself hath any care,
> But for another gives its ease,
> And builds a Heaven in Hell's despair.[1]

[1] J. H. Jowett, *Brooks by the Traveller's Way*, 162.
[2] H. C. Lees, *The Practice of the Love of Christ*, 112.

Love and Wrong

1 Cor. xiii. 5, 6.—'Love is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness' (R.V.).

THE teaching of these phrases might be gathered up under the title 'Love and Wrong.' Here are three things said about love's attitude toward the wrong and sin of the world. In its inmost heart it keeps its sweetness and its patient temper; for the wrongs it suffers it has a short memory; and in the presence of all wrong things it has the grace of sorrow.

1. 'Love is not provoked.' Dr Moffatt's rendering is, 'Love is not irritated.' There are all kinds of small annoyances and injustices in life which have it in their power to irritate us if we will allow them. But love has a way of keeping calm and sweet and good-natured in spite of them all. That does not mean that love cannot be angry. Love knows how to be indignant, how to respond with a fine, pure anger to the call of some outraged principle of goodness and truth. Love ought to be and is a flame of fire against injustice and wrong.

¶ Some fifty years ago, when others hung back, Mr Gladstone went up and down through Britain vehemently denouncing the Bulgarian atrocities and the conduct of the unspeakable Turk. That was a right and worthy anger.

¶ 'I will never believe,' said Charles Kingsley, 'that a man has any love for the good and beautiful unless he denounces the evil and disgusting the moment he sees it.'

[1] Blake.

¶ Adam Smith was once in Dalkeith Palace, when he heard some man make one of those clever, cynical remarks about some deed of wrong, and when the man passed from the room, Smith said: 'We can breathe more freely now. That man has no capacity for moral indignation.' [1]

You have no enemies, you say.
Alas, my friend, the boast is poor.
He who has mingled in the fray
Of duty that the brave endure
Must have made foes! If you have none,
You've hit no traitor on the hip;
You've dashed no cup from perjured lip;
You've turned no wrong to right;
You've been a coward in the fight!

But there is all the difference in the world between righteous anger at wrong, and irritability over every small grievance and inconvenience. Love is capable of the one, but is absolutely incapable of the other. Love is not irritable. Love is not swift to take offence. We are apt to regard irritability as a venial fault and not as a sin. But it is responsible for a vast proportion of the misery and unhappiness of the world. The peculiarity of ill-temper, Drummond says, is that it is the vice of the virtuous. There are men and women who would be all but perfect were it not that they are easily ruffled, touchy, quick tempered. And it is the vice of the virtuous because we have not really regarded it as a vice. We have thought of it rather as a failing than as a sin. The truth is that there are two great classes of sins—sins of the body and sins of the disposition. We have no doubt at all as to which of these classes of sins is the worse. It is on sins of the body we visit our heaviest condemnation. But are we right? We brand drunkenness and impurity as heinous sins—and so indeed they are. But are they worse than sins of the disposition like avarice and bad temper? We have both classes of sins pictured for us in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. The Younger Son stands for the sins of the flesh. The Elder Son stands for the sins of disposition. No fault could be found with the Elder Brother's life, but he had a jealous, sullen, and morose spirit. And at the last we see the younger son, in spite of his sin, seated at the festal board, whilst the elder brother is still outside—shut out by his own sullenness and irritability. The younger brother was his own worst enemy: he sinned for the most part against himself. But the irritability and bad temper of the elder brother clouded everybody's sky and made everybody unhappy. Irritability is not something to be dismissed as a light and trivial thing. It is fraught with measureless powers of evil. And the one cure for this devastating and desolating vice is love. To resolve to set a watch over one's lips so that the hot and hasty word shall never escape is not enough. The spirit must be changed. And the only way to do that is to let Christ take possession of the heart.

¶ In the biography of G. H. C. Macgregor, a well-known Presbyterian minister in London, there is a description of a spiritual crisis through which he passed. 'Nature had given him a peculiarly high-strung nervous temperament. This was specially seen from his childhood in sudden paroxysms of temper, in which he would quiver from head to foot or fling himself passionately on the floor. Even when he grew up these appear to have sometimes recurred. It was one of those things which, because they have to some extent a physical basis, even good men sometimes almost acquiesce in. . . . It was at Keswick that Mr Macgregor first learned to think differently about this. There he learned, as never before, to understand that yielding to any evil tendency, no matter how rooted in one's nature, is sin. In that season of self-examination and soul abasement, when, as he wrote, "I have been searched through and through, and bared and exposed and scorched by God's searching spirit," he had a special sense of the evil, and made a special agonizing confession to God of this besetting sin. And when, after these days of consecration, he left Keswick, certainly, to a large extent, the evil temper was left behind. From that time he was really, in this respect, a different man.'

2. 'Love taketh not account of evil.' Love does not enter in the account book wrongs and injuries and unkindness. They are never entered in the day-book of a passing regard or the ledger of a longer memory. We are not wholly masters of our thoughts, but we have more control over memory than we sometimes imagine. We decide the *kind* of things it shall

[1] A. MacColl.

keep. There is a morality of memory. A good memory is manifest quite as clearly in the things a man is able to forget as in the things he is able to remember. As is a man's character, so is his memory. One man forgets the wrong he does. That is the token of a sleepy conscience. Another forgets the wrong done to him. That is the token of a large heart. Love's memory is so fashioned that the helpful and the worthy things linger in it and the unkind and unjust things fade from it.

What do we keep in our memories? The slight people have offered to us? The supposed injuries they have done us? Is it the bad and bitter things we brood over and remember? Or have we the love that makes us wipe these things off the tablets of our memories and remember only the best about them? *De mortuis nihil nisi bonum.*' 'Concerning the dead nothing but what is good.' But we ought not to wait till people are dead before we practise that rule. It is a rule for life. They used to say about Abraham Lincoln that he never forgot a kindness, but that he had not room in his mind for the memory of a wrong. That ought to be true of all Christian people. For Christian people are people in whom the love of Christ has been shed abroad. And this is the very mark of love—it taketh not account of evil. In a word it forgives and forgets.

3. 'Love rejoiceth not in unrighteousness.' This is the third aspect in the relation of love to wrong. It does not allow itself to be irritated by the annoyances of life; it does not keep in memory wrongs done to itself; and, thirdly, it has no malicious pleasure in hearing of the failure and wickedness of other people, even though such failure and wickedness do not directly concern itself. 'Love rejoiceth not in unrighteousness.' Or, as Dr Moffatt vividly translates it, bringing out the thought that is in the Apostle's mind, 'Love is never glad when others go wrong.'

But is it necessary to say this? Who is glad when others go wrong? A very little honest dealing with our own hearts will show the danger. Have we ever reflected why evil news flies more swiftly than good? The fact is beyond doubt; all the witnesses agree; but why? There must be an eagerness to spread the news of some scandal. When we hear it we pass it on with some such preamble as this: 'You will be sorry to hear about So-and-so'; and we are sorry, no doubt, but not altogether. It gives us some satisfaction to spread it. If, however, we were Christian after the manner of the teaching given here we should take no joy in such a scandal; we should refuse to believe it until it were proved up to the hilt and if it were disproved we should exult.

To see evil is not of itself a mark of moral greatness; sometimes we have an uncanny perception of our own sins when we see them in others; nor is anger against sin by itself a mark of grace. The Pharisees were terribly angry against the woman taken in adultery; they were ready to stone her; but Jesus said, 'Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone.' And they went out one by one; they were angry, but they had no right to be angry, because they were without love.

Love takes no delight in hearing of men's sins and shames and follies. If we want to know what love delights in, we have it in the next phrase; it rejoices with the truth, or, as Dr Moffatt translates it, 'love is gladdened by goodness.' Here is a spring of perpetual joy. Here is an unfailing interest in life. To be a specialist in goodness, to know it even when it is half hidden, to rejoice in it, as a collector rejoices in a picture or a chair or a rare book, this is a career for love.

Yet when we are sifted by the words of this most wonderful hymn to love we have but one recourse; we see that no life in this world is worthy of God but this; we see, too, how little we are worthy to take the name of Christian—how cold and loveless our hearts appear. And yet there is a way whereby even this dream may come to earth; there was One who came from above to give us this life and this peerless love, and to Him we turn:

Kindle a flame of sacred love
On the mean altar of my heart.

Love and Truth

1 Cor. xiii. 6.—'Love rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth' (R.V.).

Love is in touch with the truth in more ways than one. Both form part of our conception of the nature of God. The God of love is also

the God of truth. That Divine truth on which Revelation rests may almost be identified with the Divine love which gave to the world the Only Begotten Son. Similarly, human love and human truth are closely connected. Both alike claim to be supreme in human life. We say that love is the greatest thing in the world, and we see that if love really ruled men's hearts most of the ills of life would disappear. But from another point of view, from a logical point of view, truth outweighs everything else. We see that, if men could but free themselves from error and falsehood, this would be a new world. Each of the two qualities, in fact, supplements the other. Love divorced from truth makes mistakes: truth divorced from love loses practical effectiveness.

St Paul only incidentally mentions the relation between love and truth, but in the metaphor which he uses there is a vivid personification of love. Love has a fellow-feeling with truth. There is a bond of sympathy between them. They feel the same likings, and the same dislikes. Neither of them can have pleasure in wickedness. Love 'rejoiceth not in unrighteousness,' but for that very reason love 'rejoiceth with truth.'

What are we to understand by the word 'truth'? Let us consider it in four aspects: (1) truth in speaking; (2) truth in thinking; (3) truth in willing; (4) truth in feeling.

1. *Truth in Speaking.*—When we talk of truth, we often mean merely truthfulness. Can we say that love 'rejoiceth with' truth-speaking? Telling the truth is certainly sometimes unpleasing to love. We shrink from giving pain to those we love; we shrink from telling them of their faults, for instance. But this is love at its weakest and poorest. Love will tell the truth at all costs when there is a real duty involved, but it will always tell it with the deepest sympathy and the most clear-sighted considerateness. Sometimes, indeed, we may say what is true of other people in a spirit of hatred, or in a spirit of malevolent gossip, like Mrs Candour in *The School for Scandal*. But we do not suppose that this is to practise the duty of truthfulness as God understands it. On the other hand, we could not act deceitfully towards our neighbour if we really felt love for him in our heart. The more we think about it, the more clearly we see that truthfulness is incompatible with hatred or hardness, and that love is incompatible with untruthfulness.

2. *Truth in Thinking.*—But speaking the truth is only one form of truth, and not, perhaps, the most important. We must think the truth also. Long before St Paul's time it had been pointed out by Plato that behind the lie on the lips there was something worse—the lie in the soul. He meant by that a deep-seated involuntary falsehood, an unconscious invincible ignorance—like the ignorance which our Lord condemned in the Jews who rejected Him when He said, 'If ye were blind ye would have no sin. But now ye say, We see; your sin remaineth.' Corresponding to these two kinds of falsehood are two kinds of truth. Behind truth, as expressed in speech, there is truth in the soul. A man must not merely be truthful to others, he must be true in himself. You remember the oft-quoted lines in *Hamlet*:

> To thine own self be true;
> And it must follow, as the night the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man.

'Thou requirest truth in the inward parts,' says the Psalmist. God requires of us inward sincerity of life.

¶ 'On one occasion when I was in Scotland,' says R. J. Campbell, 'I went to a very interesting place, the Observatory at Paisley. I there saw an instrument for measuring earthquakes, a seismological register. A block of stone, twenty-four solid feet in depth, was thrust into the earth; down and down it went, standing like an isolated column in the vacuum carefully preserved on every side of it. On the top a delicate instrument was poised, which actually wrote with a pencil a record of the vibrations and oscillations that were taking place in every part of the globe. Said the gentleman in charge, "If an earthquake were taking place in Japan its motion would be written here as faithfully as though we were on the spot to measure it." "Then what about the rumbles here in Paisley?" said I. "You make noise enough in your streets: would they be registered by your instrument?" 'No," was the reply. "We do not trouble about vibrations on the surface. We measure from the depths."'

As the groundwork of all true character, God

requires of us intellectual honesty. Truth-thinking is as much a Christian duty as truth-speaking. Let us never suppose that it does not matter what we believe. Let us be on our guard against hypocrisy and self-deceit. Do not let us disparage reason, or think of it as an irreligious faculty, or deny its value and authority in examining the evidence for or against Christianity.

Yet we feel, and feel rightly, that religion is not a mere matter of logic. Other considerations besides intellectual ones have to be taken into account. A man may be absolutely honest intellectually, and yet not arrive at a sound judgment. We cannot prove or disprove Christianity by the mere exercise of abstract reasoning. Reason may investigate documents and examine the witnesses, but the interpretation of the evidence is the real difficulty, and that interpretation will depend in part on other than purely intellectual conditions. Viewed merely in an intellectual light, the question of the truth of Christianity may well instil in us a feeling of diffidence and self-distrust. Absolute truth in religion will always, probably, be beyond our reach. Church problems and Christian evidences are so complex, while our opportunities and capacities are often so limited that we have not the means of coming to an intellectual decision at first hand. We have to fall back on authority. We do not so much examine the evidence for ourselves as read what other people say about it.

It is not uncommon, perhaps, for us to find ourselves holding on to beliefs which we feel that we are not able to maintain by force of argument against all comers. We may be out-argued, and yet we may be convinced that the fault lies with ourselves and not with our cause. What ought we to do under these circumstances? Retain our beliefs. There is nothing dishonest in doing this, if we really desire to reach truth. The logic of the heart is sometimes stronger and more to be trusted than the logic of the head. Conceivably the time may come when these obstinate, half-realized opinions of ours will pass into the clear light of reasoned conviction. Meanwhile, let us cling to every positive belief that we possess until we are assured of its unsoundness.

¶ In the days when he fought religious doubt and triumphed, Horace Bushnell, thrusting his hands through his black, bushy hair, cried out desperately, yet triumphantly, 'O men! what shall I do with these arrant doubts I have been nursing for years? When the preacher touches the Trinity and when logic shatters it all to pieces, I am all at the four winds. But I am glad I have a heart as well as a head. My heart wants the Father; my heart wants the Son; my heart wants the Holy Ghost—and one just as much as the other.'[1]

Just at these times of doubt and perplexity, which so many people nowadays know so well, love may often prove to be a very great help to our lives. Love sympathizes with truth. What a difference it often makes to our capacity for belief whether the feeling of love is a reality to us or not! Let us keep fresh in our inmost life the love of our fellowman, and our whole soul will be more widely open to the spiritual appeal which Christ makes to us. If we give way, on the other hand, to the cynical attitude, and if we regard other people with indifference or contempt, our power of recognizing the reality of a spiritual call will dwindle as our sense of the goodness of humanity falls lower and lower. Hardness of heart stifles alike both love and truth. It not merely makes love inconceivable, it makes inaudible the call of Him who claims to be the Truth. 'If ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.' 'Love one another with a pure heart fervently,' and you will feel that love is in sympathy with all that is good and true in life. Love rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with truth.

3. *Truth in Willing.*—That inward truth, in virtue of which a man becomes true in the fullest sense, cannot be restricted to truth in thinking: it includes also truth in willing. So far as religion is concerned, these aspects of truth cannot be kept altogether separate. Christ tells us that if any man willeth (or wisheth) to do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God. 'Yes,' it is sometimes said, 'you Christians will to believe, and therefore, of course, you end by believing.' But that is not putting it quite fairly. Christ did, indeed, make the will to believe a condition of some of His cures of disease. But He nowhere makes it a condition of attaining spiritual truth. For that He requires something else, namely, the submission of the human will to the will of God. If we

[1] H. T. Kerr, *The Gospel in Modern Poetry*, 61.

reject God, if we deliberately refuse to do God's will, we are not in a position to interpret the evidence for the truth of Christ's claim. You must will to do God's will (says Christ to man) and then you will learn to think God's thoughts.

4. *Truth in Feeling.*—In this union of our will and our intellect, our emotional nature has its part. We must be true in feeling as well as in willing and thinking. We must realize, so far as we may, the width of God's sympathy with His universe. St Paul, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, when describing the life of Christians as a gradual growing up into the likeness of Christ—their Head—speaks of them as 'being true in love'—not 'speaking the truth in love' as our translation has it. That phrase pointedly sums up the Christian life. Be true in love. Be candid and yet charitable. Hold your own in controversy, yet give no just cause for offence. Live your own life, yet be sensitive to the claims of others. Keep a high standard of conduct, yet never be harsh in your judgment of sinners. Be ready to give every man a reason for the faith that is in you, yet never suppose that reasoning about religion will make you religious. Be true in love. And let us remind ourselves that to those who have followed truth in love here a higher truth and love will be vouchsafed hereafter—a clearness of truth and a fullness of love—a Divine union of a transfigured love and truth—beyond all that our earthly imagination can conceive.

¶ John Stuart Blackie, beloved by all who knew him, made this text (Eph. iv. 15) the motto of his life, and used to write it in its Greek form on every envelope he addressed. It was the key-note of his character, which combined in a way, not common in that grey north country, the *perfervidum ingenium Scotorum* with a winsome genial sweetness of soul.[1]

A Taste for Truth

1 Cor. xiii. 6.—'Love rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.'

In these days of realistic novels, when so much that is scandalous and obscene is written, how often do we hear the excuse: 'After all, this is a great deal nearer the truth than the sentimental stories of a previous age.'

[1] H. Black, *University Sermons*, 117.

'Nearer the truth!' That is the counterfeit coin which we must nail to the counter. An unclean piece of scandal is frequently justified on the plea of its 'truth.' We discuss it in all its aspects on the expressed assumption that it is best to know the whole 'truth.' Now, that usage of the word is infinitely removed from its usage in the sacred Scriptures, and if we could recover the Scriptural content we should be saved from much mental and moral confusion. Let us begin the recovery here. That a thing has happened does not make it true; the happening constitutes a fact, it does not inevitably constitute a truth. The sworn and squalid statements of a police-court may represent fact; they do not represent truth. Those nauseous witnessings of brutalized life may belong to the realm of hard fact quite as surely as the sweet and tender fellowships of Darby and Joan, linked together in the serenity of a lovely eventide; but in the one case the fact is true, in the other the fact is untrue. Fact is consonance with reality; truth is consonance with the ideal. The veracious is merely what is; the truthful is what is and what ought to be. Many things ought to be described as veracious which are often described as true. A fact is a happening; a truth is a beautiful happening. A note of the organ may get out of tune; the painful sound is a painful fact, but it is not true! A singer may sing flat; the singing is an agonizing fact, but it is not true! The true fact in singing is the tuneful fact, and all discordance lacks the truth. The true facts in life are the facts that wear the beauty of the ideal, that are in tune with the infinite, and that reflect the likeness of our Lord. And therefore there is no such thing as 'an ugly truth'; many facts are ugly, but truth always carries a winsome bloom. The true is never deformed, never unclean; it is always and everywhere beautiful. Nothing is true which does not bear the likeness of Christ. 'I am the truth,' and everything is tested by its ability to ring true to Him.

1. Now, according to the Apostle Paul, there are some people who find their delight in ugly fact, and there are others who find their delight in beautiful truth. Some there are who rejoice 'in unrighteousness,' and others there are who rejoice 'in truth.' On both sides of the statement the apostolic word is intense and forceful.

Some men 'leap for joy' at a disclosure of ugliness; other men 'leap for joy' at an exhibition of truth! Common experience affords abundant corroboration of the Apostle's judgment. When the curtain lifts upon the unsavoury, the audience is often held in deep and tense expectancy. Our newspapers know it, and cater for their public. But, indeed, we need not go beyond our own hearts. Our minds are dulled by the quiet and sober commonplace; they spring out of their sleep at the suggestion of scandal! The House of Commons empties in common discussion; the benches are thronged for a scene! And so it is that gossip is more welcome than deep communion, and the highly-spiced is more enticing than our daily bread.

She cheered each dry Committee,
With tales of absent folk,
And let not truth nor pity,
Impair her little joke.
Till lives were soiled, and lives were spoiled
By every word she spoke.

2. But there is the other side to all this. There are souls that dance for joy at the emergence of the truth. Robert Louis Stevenson used to thrill with a physical ecstasy when he stumbled upon some exquisite literary expression which fitted the thought as the glove the hand. And in the plane of the moral life there are souls that experience a delightful lift and leap when they encounter some exquisite expressions of the truth, some clean heroism, some tender chivalry, some long, reticent sacrifice of life, spending itself as Ian Maclaren says that Dr Maclure's was spent, pursuing his humble ministry in the depth of dark nights, and over cold and storm-swept moors. They leap to the truth because of the loveliness of the truth, and the beauty holds them enchanted. The truth they contemplate invigorates their souls as with spiritual ozone, and they expand in a glad appreciation. They are of those whom the Apostle describes as 'rejoicing in the truth.'

3. But if ours is not the taste for the beautiful truth what shall we do? It must be confessed it is not easy, if possible, to acquire it. It is not an 'accomplishment' to be obtained at a so-called 'finishing school,' no matter whether we become pupils at the close of our youth or in the days of our prime. We do not pass from the inferior taste to the superior taste as in succeeding standards in the same school, the finer culture leaving the meaner cravings behind; we can only receive it as one of the elemental powers of a recreated life. The primary conditions of this new taste for the spiritually lovely is a taste for God. And how rare is the taste even among professing Christians! There are many Christians who have received the gift, but it is pitiably unexercised. They have received a seed, but it is not developed. On the other hand there are Christians who have exercised their supernatural senses, and they have as keen and eager a taste for God as the delightful and delightsome passion of a lover for his beloved.

4. A taste for God carries with it a taste for the things of God. If you have a taste for Him who is the Truth you will have a taste for all truth. You cannot rejoice in Him who is the Truth without having a keen enjoyment in all truth expressed in human kind. The greater carries with it the less; to appreciate the 'altogether lovely' will send you in quest of the lovely in man. Your supreme passion will be the constraint in your exploration. We know what minuteness of search a passionate hobby will engender; how it sends the unwearied feet down the long unending lane, and keeps the sleepless eyes in ceaseless vigilance, watching for the coveted prize! The quest of butterflies, of beetles, of birds' eggs, of shells, of coins, of curios, of pictures—who counts the miles when passion sits at the heart? But here is another crusade, inspired by a passion for God, an exploration of the territory of man for human loveliness, and a quest for the truth-facts undoubtedly hidden there. Who will belong to such an exploring party, a party that will go out praying, searching, delving for human loveliness, and 'rejoicing in the truth'? What discoveries we should make, and in the most unlikely and slandered places! Sweet flowers may be found in a bed of nettles! That is what Froude tells us he found in Thomas Carlyle. That is what we should find in one another if only we had eager, patient, and love-washed eyes. Human life is not all nettles; to affirm it is the perverted judgment of the cynic. They who have a passion for God will find the Godlike everywhere; they will find the flowers of moral loveliness even in the

midst of the noisome waste. And when they have found them their fellow-searchers shall hear an exultant shout, and they shall come together, and in the gracious discovery there shall be a common 'rejoicing in the truth.'[1]

The Optimism of Love

1 Cor. xiii. 7.—'Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.'

The central thought round which this group of phrases may be gathered, and in the light of which they may be interpreted, is the optimism of love. Only, when we say that love is optimistic we must be quite sure that we know what we mean by optimism. There is, for example, the optimism of the man who is determined always to look on the bright side of things. And 'looking on the bright side of things' for him amounts to a stubborn refusal to see that there is a dark side at all. That is a kind of optimism gained by a deliberate suppression of the truth. A delicate refusal to face the facts of life is not optimism but self-deception. Such a man turns away his face from the sorrows and sins, the tragedies and despairs of his brethren.

¶ Louis XV. had always the kingliest abhorrence of Death. He would not suffer Death to be spoken of; avoided the sight of churchyards, funereal monuments, and whatsoever could bring it to mind. It is the resource of the ostrich; who, hard hunted, sticks his foolish head in the ground, and would fain forget that his foolish unseeing body is not unseen too. We can figure the thought of Louis that day, when, all royally caparisoned for hunting, he met, at some sudden turning in the Wood of Senart, a ragged peasant with a coffin: 'For whom?'—It was for a poor brother slave, whom Majesty had sometimes noticed slaving in those quarters. 'What did he die of?'—'Of hunger':—the King gave his steed the spur.[2]

The true optimism is broad and deep. It has a wide and catholic outlook. There is nothing selective in its gaze out upon the world. It sees things as they are. It is the reasoned and settled conviction—not that every thing is all right—but that the ultimate meaning of things is good. It is the belief arrived at—after a frank facing of the facts—that, in Emerson's phrase, things in this universe are arranged for truth and benefit.

Let us see now how love makes good its claim to this virtue. The story of love's optimism as it unfolds itself is this: 'Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

1. '*Love beareth all things.*'—Some have read 'covereth,' to avoid what seems to them to be a needless repetition, for the word 'endureth' follows at the end of the verse. Love is thus set forth as busy making excuses for the wrong-doer, and veiling as far as may be the seamy side of life. But surely this is not the worthiest view we can take of the work of love. The actual word that St Paul used admits of such an interpretation, but one feels that 'beareth' should be read rather than 'covereth,' not merely because it is nearer the original meaning of the verb used, but because it is so much more congruous with all else that the Apostle says about love.

Love is not afraid to face life. It does not hesitate to stoop under the whole weight of life, all pity and wrong, all folly and pain. It cannot be crushed beneath the burden. It has vast powers of self-recovery. It has boundless spiritual elasticity. In the words of an old poem, 'Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.'

There is both a passive and an active meaning in the word 'beareth.' Love is capable of wonderful submission. Its acceptance of life is quiet and catholic. No matter how great the burden of responsibility or of difficulty, love accepts it without protest. It faces the slights and blind scorns and misunderstandings, the resentments and malevolent oppositions, without comment.

¶ Henry Martyn was far too rapturous a being ever to reach a stoic composure, but he came at last very near to the quite different composure of the charity that 'beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things,' and those who read his story see that most sensitive and irritable of beings grow to such indomitable patience that a friend, in writing of a maddening character, could say, 'There is little hope that any person but Martyn could bear with him.'[1]

[1] J. H. Jowett, in *The British Congregationalist*, Nov. 1, 1906.

[2] Carlyle, *French Revolution*, i. 17.

[1] C. E. Padwick, *Henry Martyn*, 60.

¶ Mr Martin Wood has said that Ruskin could lose himself in his own majestic prose as completely as Whistler often did in the beauty of his own painting. And 'with the waters of beauty closing over their heads one was as deaf and blind as the other.' What the love of beauty did for those two supersensitive men, the love of Christ can achieve for the most sensitive Christian.[1]

But love is not in this world as clay in the hands of the potter. Its acceptance of life does not always mean its acquiescence in the thing accepted. As long as there is an unlovely thing in life there will be a protest in the heart of love. Love stands for the grace and peace beyond the ill manners and ungoverned passions and unrestrained wrongs of a world that is yet in the making. Love would protest if it were any use protesting. Love would stand resentful and aloof if thereby the world might be taught to win the heavenly victory. But love knows that there is but one way to the highest and holiest service of mankind. It is the way of the Christ, who accepted life that He might lift it, whose passing through the world exemplified the silence of the true idealist, who knew that the thing that goes most deeply into the heart of the world is the unuttered protest of perfect fidelity to truth and complete unselfishness. Perhaps it is only on Calvary that we can find the last meaning of these calm, patient words about love bearing all things.

2. '*Love believeth all things.*'—Love is not credulous. It is not ready to deceive itself or to be deceived by others. It does not merely invest life with the bright garment of a kindly judgment. It looks with its clear, wise eyes *into* things, and sees the brightness glowing and shining at the very heart of them. The glad confidence of love is born of the Divinity of life. Love cannot believe anything too high about human life, for it cometh from above. Love looks out upon humanity as one looks upon some youth who, maybe, is not doing very well, but who has behind him the traditions of a godly home, and about him the prayers of two who know the friendship of the Lord, and within him the indestructible good instincts that are fostered and developed in the heaven-sweet atmosphere of reverence for all right things. That youth is humanity, whose home is in the heart of the Father, who hath made men in love, humanity with so many Godward instincts slumbering in its soul, and with the Infinite Pity yearning over it day by day and age after age. Love is not surprised at any sweet and gracious thing that manifests itself in human character. Love was expecting it. It knew all the time that it was there and would find its way into the light.

[1] H. C. Lees, *The Practice of the Love of Christ*, 163.

¶ Canon Scott Holland, in his essay on Gladstone,[1] says that 'the everlasting wonder was always how he ever could have passed through his incomparable experience of a world which he fought so hardly and from which he had so often endured such virulent attack and such unsparing hate, and yet had retained the undying charity "which hopeth all things and believeth all things"; and still looked out upon man with the dauntless faith which is convinced that everybody must be on its side, if only they understood. No suspicions could cloud this faith: no disappointments undermine it. And it was all the more remarkable because of his profound realization of sin and the alarming thoroughness of his recognition of the awful conflict between good and evil.'

And again, the construction love puts upon life, and the faith love has in life, are real and splendid factors in the world's betterment. We rise to the demands that are made upon us. There is a tendency in all life to adjust itself to the judgment passed upon it. There is such a thing as salvation by the faith of others. It is no small thing to help a man to favour his own chances in the fight where the prize is character. Through the tired ranks of the vanquished, through the throngs of the disheartened, across the trampled field of life strewn with wasted efforts and battered dreams, love passes, still believing all things. And in the light of that brave faith many a man stretches out his hand for his sword and finds it worth gripping, even though it be a broken one.

3. '*Love hopeth all things.*'—Where it cannot find room for its faith amid the narrow and sad realities of the hour love slips its hand into the hand of hope and carries its faith onward into the ampler air of good and holy possibility. It is not that hope takes up the tale where faith sits stricken and speechless. Faith and hope are so interwoven that they can hardly be

[1] *Personal Studies*, 31.

treated as two separate things. In love's soul there is a faith in human life as God made it that demands a larger space than the present and a wider outlook than the outlook of the hour. So hope comes to faith's assistance, and with one on either hand love passes onward to the place where the largest and loftiest creed has room to breathe. There is an optimism that comes, in part, of the long view, and that finds its gospel written on the horizon. It is this that carries love in joyous triumph over the darkest and most shameful facts in the human story. Love does not deny them; but it does assert they are not all. For the race, for the nation, for the Church, for the single life, love claims the future; and, amid the innumerable failures and defeats and shames of these mortal years, it stands the bright undaunted prophet of some better thing.

4. '*Love endureth all things.*'—This is the final thing that the Apostle says about the optimism of love. The word 'endureth' is a stronger word than the word 'beareth' in the first clause. It means that the spirit is not crushed under the weight of heaviest affliction and disappointment. This is the very climax of love's courage and indomitable optimism—it hopes when it cannot find ground for faith, it endures even when it cannot find ground for hope. It keeps its face to the dawn even at darkest midnight. Jesus speaking of the difficulties and trials that beset a man in the Christian life said, 'He that endureth to the end shall be saved.' Love has that enduring quality. It holds on when others faint and give way. Multitudes have taken a hand in the great work of creating a better world. They have been animated by social enthusiasm, by sentimental pity, by concern for the safety of the State. But many of those have grown weary in well-doing; they have been chilled by disappointment, soured by disillusionment. But love—the love that looks up to God and then out upon man—endures all things, clings to its task in spite of disappointment, persists in its labours in spite of all delays. And when at last the new earth is created, it will be this love, this believing, hoping, indomitable love—enduring all things—that will have brought it to pass.

Love's Claim

1 Cor. xiii. 7.—'Love believeth all things.'

Those who know the world, or have had large dealings with men, are constantly reminding us that it is not wise to give our confidence too unreservedly to anyone. It is said that Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman, genial, kindly, almost affectionate as he was, attained the position which was his partly owing to the fact that he never entirely trusted anybody. Spurgeon, in his often-quoted remark about Gladstone, said, 'we believe in no man's infallibility, but it is restful to believe in one man's integrity'; and by his emphasis on 'one,' and by his use of the adjective 'restful,' implied that the experience to which he referred was a rare one. Indeed, it will be strange if, to all of us, experiences have not come which have led to a dismal despair concerning human nature.

¶ Thomas Hardy, it is said, was once asked why he had so seldom drawn a good woman, and replied, 'Because I have as seldom met one.'

At the same time, all of us surely have experience which gives the lie to this dreary view of human nature—the experience of friendship or of love. For, once a man loves, he believes in him whom he loves. Love idealizes; and love trusts; and, even when dark facts are known about the person loved, love hopes for a day in which the loved one will be all that is dreamed for him.

We should always be sorry for censorious and suspicious people. For it must needs be that their conditions, or their experience, have been mournful. They may have been born with a querulously suspecting mind. Or they may have trusted and been bitterly disappointed; and in the haste of their disappointment have said, 'all men are a lie.' Or they may themselves be liars, in that fearful sense of being a carefully-concocted, long-continued heart-sham, and judge all men by themselves. But, whatever of these may be their experience, it certainly can be said that they do not know human love and human friendship; for no noble friend can be suspicious and censorious long. Love known strongly by a man almost always affects his attitude taken to other men. It leads one

to believe (as we ought to believe) that men are better than their deeds; or, at least, that even if in this and that particular they be untrustworthy, they are splendid in possibility. Even in the face of disaster, Love, as a fact in the experience of all of us, believeth all things.

1. Let us try to carry this idea into the highest of all spheres. And in this way. In the central doctrine of Christianity we have the supreme illustration of the fact that love believeth all things; and there is, therefore, a supreme call upon our honour not to betray the trust of the love of God.

The heart of Christianity is found in the Cross of Christ. The glad tidings which we have to proclaim is the redemption of men through the Cross of Jesus Christ. The great and amazing fact which we have to preach is that God sent His Son Jesus—Himself in human form—to be born and to grow, sinless, to be lonely and weary and tempted, to be betrayed, to be buffeted upon the cheek by an impious hand, to be purple-robed and thorn-crowned, to be in solitary agony in a garden and to die, that men, beholding Love in pain unto death, might be saved and be made like Jesus. That is *the* essential of Christianity.

But we can see that that view has certain implications. It implies that *men are worth saving*. God does not go all the length of a dead Christ, for a purpose which is not worth while. It also implies that *men can be saved*. God is not, if we may use the word, a visionary. He does not do that which cannot have its effect. Therefore, in sending Jesus to save men, He teaches us that men may be made like Jesus.

But, if men can be made like Jesus, surely this is involved—that men can be attracted by goodness when it is seen. That, again, implies that men, here and now, have a certain desire for goodness. Man, that is to say, aspires. And his aspirations may be realized, or the Divine project is doomed to failure from the beginning. But we know, from painful experience, the ineffectiveness of unaided aspiration. So, with the aspiring, there must be also a faculty of laying hold upon strength from without, which is the faculty of faith. Without aspiration and without faith on our part, the Divine purpose for us in the Cross of Christ could not be realized. We may say then that the fact of the Cross implies a belief in us as able to aspire and to trust. In this way as in others, the Cross restores our self-respect. It displays a Divine estimate of us as nobler than we dared to think, and as possessing possibilities grander than once we dared to dream. The Love that is God believes in us.

2. But the chief importance of these implications of our beliefs lies in the application of them. Our friends believe in us. That we know. But also God believes in us. That is involved in our Christian faith. Given these two facts, a mighty inspiration is granted to us, and with it a clear call to our honour.

We all have friends, and they think a vast deal of us. Wives, husbands, our ordinary friends think the world of us. And this is God's ministering to make us live up to the good which they discern in us. 'Those who trust us educate us,' as George Eliot says in *Daniel Deronda*.

¶ The Rev. W. A. Crokat, one of Bishop John Wordsworth's chaplains, writes of him: 'One of the things that made the deepest impression at the time was his absolute trust in a man when he once accepted him into his confidence. It was such as would make any man ashamed even to seem to come short of it. Trust in money matters, and trust in confidential matters where others were concerned, seemed at times almost greater than they ought to be. But it arose so evidently from the simple goodness of the Bishop's heart: his sense of the greatness of the work entrusted to himself was so real, and his wish that others younger than himself should take their full share in their more limited sphere was so strong, that one's own ideals of work were unconsciously raised to a higher level.' [1]

Believe in me, at once you bid
Myself believe that, since one soul has disengaged
Mine from the shows of things, so much is fact: I waged
No foolish warfare, then, with shades, myself a shade,
Here in the world—may hope my pains will be repaid! [2]

But, more than that, there is the inspiration

[1] *Life of Bishop John Wordsworth*, 184.
[2] Browning, *Fifine at the Fair*.

of the God-belief in us. It is very wonderful. We are sick of ourselves. Well, that is not surprising. Lusts, thoughtlessness, selfishness, compromisings of principle surprise us. We have settled down into a kind of average morality. There is nothing very squalid in it; but all the glow of a lofty idealism is dead. We think that the heights are not for us. We are sunk in a kind of contented hopelessness. Against all that half-hearted view of life, let us set the death of Christ. We say we are not worth it. That is not the point. He thought we were. We are despairing of soul for ourselves. How can we despair? It is almost the last injury to Jesus.

Why art thou despairing?
God shall forgive thee all but thy despair.

Christ thought us good enough to die for. God grant us to recognize ourselves worth the death of Christ.

Let us also remember the call to honour that there is in this love-believing. Here stand these women, these children, and above all, this Lord. Are we to betray their trust? The whole manhood of us rises against that possibility. Rather, we shall say, 'Thou believest in me enough to die for me; and I am man enough to fight against Thine enemies.' And when that is our true speech, He who can never know defeat makes it His business to see that we win.

The Hopefulness of Christ

1 Cor. xiii. 7.—'Love hopeth all things.'

1. In his admirable monograph on Cromwell, Lord Morley makes a very striking statement. He says that hope burned in Cromwell like a pillar of fire, when it had gone out in all others. When prospects were gloomy, and everything seemed dark, and other hearts had yielded to despair, still, like the burning pillar of the Exodus, hope was aflame in the great heart of Cromwell. Now if that be conspicuously true of Cromwell, there is a greater than he of whom it is also true. Unceasingly, unfalteringly, unfailingly, hope burned and glowed in the heart of Jesus Christ. And as they said of Christ, and said with truth, Never man spake like this man, so with equal truth might we assert, Never man hoped like this man.

(1) We see the hopefulness of Christ very clearly in *His daily handling of men and women.* Jesus dealt with people in a faithful way, but always also in a hopeful way. How to be faithful and at the same time hopeful is sometimes one of the most difficult of problems—how to be true to our own sense of truth and yet at the same time to keep hope alive. As we read the life of Jesus we are amazed at His solving of that problem, for never was He less than perfect truth, yet did He always quicken into hope. Never was man so faithful as the Lord. Never one who could so pierce the depths. He never uttered a single word of compliment. He never said anything because it sounded kindly. And the amazing thing is that with that fine fidelity to all that was saddest and all that was most tragical, chords that were broken began again to vibrate under the thrill and music of His speech. Poor women who had fallen to the streets began to hope again, they knew not why. The thief on the Cross, after a lawless life, awoke to feel that he might be remembered. In the very hour that they were self-exposed, and found themselves judged as man had never judged them, in that very hour they began to hope. That is always the wonder of Christ's hopefulness. It leans on the bosom of a perfect knowledge. It sees the vilest, and yet does not despair. It knows the worst, and yet it hopes the best. And that is why the hopefulness of Jesus is still moving and mighty in the world, when other hopes, that were all golden once, have passed, broken, into the glen of weeping.

¶ Jesus saw hope in that unspiritual time—in the unrest and heaving of all these unquiet spirits; heard truth behind the wild and frothy talk; was sure that always when things are at the darkest, dawn is near the breaking, and that when men have turned from God, soon, disappointed elsewhere, they will be streaming back again to Him in whom alone, He knew, that they can find what can long satisfy their hungry souls. Always He kept daringly preaching hopefulness when others had lost heart; always He was inciting to sheer obvious impossibilities, which none the less somehow got done; always undauntedly He hurled His brave defiance in the face of every fearfulness, and of every discouragement; and of every

despair! That was ever His audacious way. Looking at you now, beaten and down, He won't lose hope, and bids you not lose hope. Up again! up again! His brave voice rings out, for we will win yet, you and I! As Massinger has it:—

Quench not
The holy fires within you; though temptations
Shower down upon you, clasp your armour on:
Fight well, and thou shalt see after these wars
Thy head wear sunbeams, and thy feet tread stars![1]

(2) This same element of hopefulness is very evident in *Jesus' teaching.* There are no words of any teacher that are quite so hopeful as the words of Christ. If you read the biographies of preachers you will find one very common feature in them. You will find that almost all the greatest preachers began their ministries with a stern note. From Chrysostom right on to Dr Parker there is scarcely one preacher of the gospel who did not begin by lifting up his voice and calling for judgment on a sinful world. The singular thing is that with Jesus the beginning was quite different from that. The old Jewish law began with cursing, but the ministry of Christ began with blessing. 'Blessed are they who hunger and who thirst.' 'Blessed are the pure in spirit.' That was the music which heralded the message, and that, too, was the music of the close. Many preachers lose hope when they grow old. Life lessens hope by its terrible realities. Instead of hope there comes a certain quietude, and the voice of a not unhappy resignation. But Christ the teacher, to the very end, and in spite of all that life had meant for Him, still taught in the quiet of the upper chamber with the magnificent hopefulness of youth.

(3) And then again we find this hopefulness in *Jesus' attitude towards the future.* It is in that regard that the hopefulness of Christ is perhaps most amazing. For just think of the kind of treatment which Jesus had from men. Some of them thought He was beside Himself, and others of them thought He had a devil. And His own household did not believe in Him, and His own disciples did not understand Him, and His own people, to crown all, gave Him the last welcome of the Cross. If there ever was treatment that might have caused despair, it was the treatment Jesus knew. If there ever was ground to think the future hopeless, these grounds were in the life of Christ. And yet, with a heart calm as a summer sea, Christ seems to have looked right down the ages with a hope that was radiant and unquenchable. Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached, He said, this that this woman hath done shall be declared. As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death until He come. He never doubted, though Simon might insult Him—He never doubted on the verge of Calvary, that men and women to the end of time would gather to His feet and would adore. Spat upon, He never doubted that. Mocked at, He never doubted that. Disbelieved in—hung upon a cross—He never doubted the glory yet to be.

2. Let us see, now, if we can discover the main sources of this saving hopefulness. There are three lines of thought which we may follow and which may be regarded as Scripturally valid.

(1) In the first place, the hopefulness of Christ was *bound up organically with His sinlessness.* Is it not true that the deadliest enemy of hope is sin? Every time we yield to sin, with all the other miseries it brings, there is always a dimming of the star of hope. The man who is the slave of sin lives on the margins of despair. The victim of a secret habit is always growing steadily more hopeless. On the other hand, you never meet a man who is living in a victorious way, into whose eyes there is not coming steadily the unmistakable light of a fine hope. Well, Jesus Christ was sinless. He was tempted, yet He was sinless. He had His battle to fight in full reality, yet at every point of it He stood and conquered. And so out of our own experience we can see that in that tempted yet ever-conquering manhood there is one source of the hopefulness of Christ.

(2) But not only was it rooted in His sinlessness; it was also *rooted in His love.* Love hopeth all things. Think of the father with his prodigal son, how he still hopes in the teeth of all the evidence. Think of the wife of an unworthy husband, how she still hopes for him, although he be a beast. For love remembers as nothing else remembers, and love can see when other eyes are blind, and love can cling

[1] A. J. Gossip, *The Galilean Accent*, 12.

with a Divine tenacity when other hands are loosened in despair. Now, whatever Christ was, He was wonderfully and infinitely loving. We may have doubts about many things in Christ, but we never can have any doubts of that. And if love, even *our* poor love, hopeth all things of the beloved, then in the love of Christ we find another secret of His hope.

(3) And, lastly, the hopefulness of Christ was *His utterance of the hopefulness of God.* It was the revelation of the Father's hopefulness, and, saying that, there is no more to say. Have we ever deeply or seriously thought about the hopefulness of God? In the long story of an evolving universe—in the steady trend of every year to harvest—in the upbuilding of every human life—have we discerned the hopefulness of God? Theologians have talked enough about His anger. We want to talk a little more about His hopefulness. It is unconquerable. It is irresistible. It is undimmed through ages and millenniums. And for us who believe that Jesus knew the Father in a unique and incommunicable way, that hopefulness upon the fields of Galilee is but the transcript of the hope in heaven.

The Permanence of Love

1 Cor. xiii. 8.—'Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away' (R.V.).

'Love never faileth,' says the Apostle. But does not the New Testament tell us a very different story? 'He came unto his own, and his own received him not'—that was one of the failures of love. 'Judas . . . having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night'—another of the failures of love. 'They all forsook him, and fled'—still another of the failures of love. 'There they crucified him'—by all the world's standards the supreme failure of love in all the ages. Wherever to-day there is one son of the Eternal Father still in the far country of self-will and self-indulgence, there is one of the failures of love. Wherever there is a broken home, a severed friendship—there are the failures of love. A divided Christendom is one of the tragic failures of love as well as of intelligence.

But before we dismiss this great word of St Paul as blindly visionary, let us look at it a little more closely. As we do so we find that he is not speaking at all of the complete and easy triumph of love in the world. Love, as he sees it, has still much to bear—'beareth all things'; it has still much to believe where faith is sorely tested—'believeth all things'; it has still much to hope when discouragement is in the air and despair is easy—'hopeth all things'; it has still much to cling to with an iron grip when others are letting go—'endureth all things.' And it is just at this point, when he is speaking of the persistence of love, that Paul says, 'Love never faileth.'

The word rendered 'faileth' helps to throw light upon the Apostle's meaning. It means literally to 'fall to the ground.' Love never 'falls out'; love never 'falls to the ground.' The picture the word summons up is that of a company of soldiers marching through the heat in some tropic land. And as the weary miles lengthen out and as the heat intensifies, exhausted Nature reveals itself, and one after another faints and falls by the way—until at last out of all the company only one is left doggedly, patiently marching on. 'Love never falls out.'

1. This is always one of the characteristics of real love—it lasts. The best love of all is the love of God in Christ. And this is one of the marks of the Divine love—it never fails. 'Having loved his own which were in the world,' says one of the Evangelists, 'he loved them unto the end.' But we shall make a vast mistake if we think that word 'end' refers simply to the end of our Lord's earthly life. He loved them on through death. He loves them still. 'He loved them unto the end.' That is true, but the end is never reached. 'I am persuaded,' wrote St Paul, 'that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' We are creatures of this time-world and can think only in the categories of space and time; we cannot help using finite words when we attempt to describe infinite things. And when we use such phrases as loving 'to the end,' 'to the finish,' 'to the very last,' we really mean loving through time and into eternity.

And who saith 'I loved once'?
Not angels,—whose clear eyes, love, love foresee,
Love, through eternity,
And by To Love do apprehend To Be.
Not God, called Love, His noble crown-name, casting
A light too broad for blasting!
The great God changing not from everlasting,
Saith never 'I loved once.'
Oh, never is 'Loved once'
Thy word, thou Victim-Christ, misprizèd friend!
Thy cross and curse may rend,
But having loved Thou lovest to the end.
This is man's saying—man's. Too weak to move
One spherèd star above,
Man desecrates the eternal God-word Love
By his No More, and Once.[1]

That is how God loves. And all true love is of God, and possesses that eternal quality which belongs to the Divine love itself. Beyond death as on this side of death, in eternity as in time, love goes on loving. How, in face of a statement like this, can anyone have a doubt about the possibility of recognition in the eternal world? Scripture never seeks to prove it, it simply takes it for granted. But a sentence like this quite clearly implies it. For love is a personal relation, and it is a reciprocal relation. As the philosopher would say, it implies subject and object. It would be foolish to talk about such a personal thing as love if there, as here, we did not exist as persons. It was a true instinct that made Charles Kingsley wish to have those three Latin words engraved on the stone which marked the place where he and his wife lay buried, 'Amavimus, Amamus, Amabimus'—'We have loved, we love, we shall love.' We *shall* love! For love never faileth.

2. Now it was this very quality of eternity inherent in love that made it so vastly superior to those other gifts by which the Corinthians set such store. The Corinthians made a great fuss about the gift of tongues, and the gift of prophecy, and the gift of knowledge. They were proud and puffed up if they possessed the one or the other. They set little or no store by love. They were jealous of one another, and they envied one another, with the result—to use the Apostle's own vivid phrase—that they bit and wellnigh devoured one another. Love was a sort of Cinderella in Corinth, disregarded, ignored, and neglected. And yet the Apostle declares that tongues and prophecy and knowledge are nothing compared with love. For the word 'temporary' was written across the gifts on which they prided themselves so much. But love was eternal. He illustrates and enforces the superiority of love in a series of contrasts.

(1) The first contrast is with *prophecy*—'whether there be prophecies, they shall fail.' Now prophecy was a gift which the Apostle highly valued. For it was a gift that contributed to the edification of the Church. And yet it is nothing compared with love—for 'whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away'—'done away' in the sense of 'being brought to an end.' Now, in what sense will they be done away? Well, it is quite obvious that prophecies in the sense of foretellings are 'done away' when they are fulfilled. The Old Testament, for example, is full of prophecies that have been 'done away.' In Isaiah and Jeremiah we find prophecies of judgment and doom. They were 'done away' by their fulfilment in the Exile. In the Second Isaiah we find glowing prophecies of restoration: they were 'done away' by their fulfilment in the Return.

And even when prophecy is interpreted in the sense of preaching—there will come a time when it shall be 'done away.' Preaching presupposes an unconverted world. But we read of a time coming when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea: when it shall be no longer necessary for a man to teach his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for all shall know Him from the least to the greatest of them.

(2) The next contrast is with *tongues*—'whether there be tongues, they shall cease.' The gift of tongues was a gift of ecstatic speech. The Apostle did not rate it very highly for the simple reason that the speech was unintelligible to the ordinary Christian, and did not therefore minister to his edification. The Corinthians, on the contrary, were inordinately proud of this particular gift. They rated it above prophecy. It was more startling, and therefore attracted more attention, and perhaps brought its possessor more glory. But of this gift, too, the Apostle says that it is temporary. This

[1] E. B. Browning.

particular gift of tongues was just a sign for the unbelieving—to constrain their attention to the Church and its message. When the Church had become sufficiently strong to command attention without these adventitious aids they simply ceased.

Suppose we give a wider meaning to the phrase and interpret it of languages in general (though, of course, that interpretation was not in the Apostle's mind), it still remains true. 'Tongues' are all the while 'ceasing.' Living languages become dead languages, and some pass clean out of the knowledge of men. Nothing, indeed, in the history of the world is more striking than the temporary character of 'tongues.' The language in which Paul wrote this letter—that Greek language which was the Corinthian's native speech—has 'ceased.' Latin, the language of Imperial Rome, the official language of the world—as a spoken language it has 'ceased.' Indeed, the phenomenon of a 'ceasing' language is one that can be witnessed within the limits of these islands of ours. The Gaelic language is losing its hold in Scotland, and one of the religious problems of our day is caused by the disappearance of the Welsh language from the mining valleys and the industrial towns of South Wales.

(3) The third contrast is with *knowledge*—'whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away.' There were those in Corinth who prided themselves on their 'knowledge.' They felt they had an insight into the mysteries of the faith which was not given to others. They were the 'intellectuals' of the Church, the people who considered themselves above the rest in intelligence, and who rather looked down upon them in consequence. They, too, were neglecting the permanent for the temporary—for whether there be knowledge, it shall be 'done away'; 'done away,' the Apostle means, in the sense of being superseded and made obsolete. Knowledge is a growing, expanding, developing thing—so that the learned man of one day may be completely behind the times the next.

Think of geography. It is not a bit of use producing a map of Europe ten years of age—almost every national boundary has been altered in the meantime. Or think of science. Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, all of them are superseded and out of date.

¶ Henry Drummond mentions a striking fact about the medical library in Edinburgh. When Sir James Simpson, the discoverer of chloroform, died, he was succeeded by his nephew. The new Professor was asked by the librarian to go through the library and pick out those books on his subject which were no longer needed. And his reply to the librarian was this: 'Take every text-book that is more than ten years old and put it down in the cellar.'

And as it is in the realm of secular knowledge, so is it also in the realm of religious knowledge. The learned theologian of a generation ago would find himself hopelessly out of date to-day. For in the interval the critic and the historian have been at work. They have given us a new view of the Bible; they have given us a new conception of the environment in which Jesus lived; they have given us a new apologetic in face of the new science. And not only is our knowledge of the facts connected with our religion a progressive thing, but our apprehension of religious truth is a growing thing too. We grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We get truer and larger views of God.

Prophecy and tongues and knowledge are good things in themselves; their only fault is that they are temporary. It is strange how people pride themselves on transient and temporary things still. On wealth, for example, —though we know quite well that, as we brought nothing into this world, so we can carry nothing out. On fame—though we know quite well that the judgments of earth do not carry with them the judgments of heaven, and that there are 'first who shall be last, and last who shall be first.' On social position—though we all come at last to a coffin and six feet of earth. There is nothing wrong in these things, but we ought not to give our strength to them, for the simple reason that they do not last. Nothing deserves the homage and devotion of the immortal soul except something which is itself immortal. That is why love is supreme above all other gifts. It is never outgrown. It is as much at home in heaven as it is here upon the earth. Therefore with all our getting in this mortal life let us get the loving heart.

When the last day is ended,
And the nights are through;

When the last sun is buried
In its grave of blue;

When the stars are snuffed like candles,
And the seas no longer fret;
When the winds unlearn their cunning,
And the storms forget;

When the last lip is palsied,
And the last prayer said;
Love shall reign immortal
While the worlds lie dead![1]

Mystery

1 Cor. xiii. 9.—'We know in part.'

1. It has ever been a mark of Christianity that it kept men alive to the mysteries around them. The souls that have drunk most deeply of the Christian doctrine are the souls that have most felt the mystery of life. We may gather up the Christian teaching in confessions, and it is vitally necessary that that should be done. But when everything is tabulated and reduced to system, we are still haunted by a sense of the inexplicable—more is meant than meets the ear. No doubt a chemist could explain the causes of all the colours in a sunset. And yet in the blending glories of a sunset there is something that no man shall ever analyse.

¶ Balzac tells us the story of a chemist whose absorption in his scientific work led him to neglect his wife. One day as he is describing his latest experiments he suddenly notices that she is in tears. 'Tears!' he cries. 'I have analyzed tears. Tears contain a little phosphate of lime, chloride of sodium, mucous, and water.'[2]

Perhaps there never was a time in which the sense of mystery was less present than to-day. How far that dying out of the mysterious may be traced to the decline of living faith is a question that might admit of much discussion. But there are other causes which we may indicate.

(1) One is the tyranny of facts under which we live. There is no man more apt to be blind to the great mysteries than the specialist, and this is pre-eminently the age of specialism. Tennyson is most wonderfully accurate in every reference he makes to Nature, and in this, as in so many other points, he interprets the spirit of the age he lived in. Now no one will question the value of that spirit, or the immense gains which it has won for us. At the same time, an age with that dominant note is not likely to be haunted by the mystery of things.

(2) And then this is an age of machinery, and there is little mystery in a machine. We are likely to grow dull to many wonders when we take to calculating by *horse*-power. 'So many hundred hands in this mill,' says Charles Dickens in that powerful little story of his, *Hard Times*, 'so many hundred horse steam power. It is known, to the force of a single pound weight, what the engine will do. . . . There is no mystery in it.' And he means that when an age puts the emphasis not on man but on machinery, we are not likely to be troubled greatly by the strange sense of the inexplicable.

(3) And then again this is an age of travel. This world is explored into its darkest corners. We do not expect now, as men expected once, to hear of marvellous things from Africa or India. One had only to cross the sea with Sir John Mandeville to be in the midst of astounding mysteries at once. But the world is very different to-day. Its most distant countries have been mapped and photographed. Knowledge has come, and perhaps a little wisdom with it; but the older sense of the world's mystery has gone.

¶ 'Ah me!' says the Scottish poet Alexander Smith,[1] 'what a world this was to live in two or three centuries ago, when it was getting itself discovered. . . . Then were the Arabian Nights commonplace, enchantments a matter of course, and romance the most ordinary thing in the world. Then man was courting Nature, now he has married her. Every mystery is dissipated.'

2. In these times, then, it is supremely important that we should endeavour to keep alive the sense of mystery. And we may be sure that the Lord Jesus Christ always meant it to have large room in His disciples' hearts.

(1) Think, for example, of what our Lord meant by unbelief. 'Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?' That was the one rebuke which He used to launch at His disciples, for

[1] F. L. Knowles.
[2] *The Quest of the Absolute.*

[1] *On Vagabonds.*

there was nothing that grieved Christ more than lack of faith. It was not lack of faith in any particular doctrine—it was not *that* which called out the rebuke of Christ. It was rather such a view of God's great universe as left no room for any mystery in it. Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Is there nothing else abroad but storm and cloud-rack? Had they only felt the mystery of the Divine, touching and girding even the angry waters, they had been less disquieted out at sea. That was what Jesus meant by unbelief: not a mind that denies, but a spirit that disowns; a heart that will not recognize, amid things seen, the power, the love, the mystery of God. We see, then, that the disciple of Christ must have a spirit that is alive to mystery.

(2) Or take that other declaration: 'Except ye become as little children.' We cannot even see the Kingdom of God, unless within us is the heart of childhood; and all things are mysterious to the child. The children's world is full of spiritual presences; they never think of God as far away. Flowers speak to them in voices we have lost, the night winds cry to them, the clouds are still peopled countries. The fear of childhood is not the fear of cowardice; the fear of childhood is the fear of imagination. We should all fear the darkness as the child does, if we believed it was full of eyes and living things. Now Jesus wants no disciple to be childish: when we become men we put away childish things. But the childlike spirit that believes in possibilities, that hungers for a world behind the world, that cannot touch a flower or hear an echo but there comes some suggestion of things mystical, that spirit is the spirit of the Christian.

3. It is notable, too, that Jesus deepened the mystery of everything He touched. Things never become less mysterious, always more, when they have passed through the mind and heart of Jesus Christ. We think of Jesus as the great explainer, and we thank God for the rough places Christ has made plain. He has given an answer to a thousand problems. But Jesus never explained anything by lessening the mystery that clung to it. He is a sorry teacher who shows the merely obvious. Jesus enlarged the mystery of things, intensified it, deepened it. When He wished to make men understand a matter, He showed that there was more to be understood than they had dreamed.

(1) Take one of His leading words like *life*, for instance. We say, and say rightly, that Christ explains life to us. We understand it better, and we can live it better, in the light that Jesus has cast upon its meaning. But when we think of what life meant in the old pagan world, how shallow it was, how sensuous and short, and when we compare that with the life that is in Christ, with its depth, its joy, its fullness, its infinite issues, we feel at once how the mystery of life is deepened in passing through the hands of Jesus Christ.

(2) Or take the thought of *death*. Christ has illumined death; but has He banished its mystery? He has taken away its sting, but deepened its mystery. There are glorious hopes in it, as we see when we compare the pagan attitude to death with the Christian.

¶ Compare the agony and defiance of Pagan epitaphs, like that of Procope, 'I, Procope, lift up my hands against the gods who took me hence undeserving,' with the glad certainty of the Christian over his dead wife, 'Terentiana *lives*'; or, 'Agape, thou shalt live for ever.' Compare the hopelessness of the bereaved Pagan father, 'Our hope was in our boy, now all is ashes and lamentation,' or on the tomb of a child of five, 'To the unrighteous gods who robbed me of life,' with the cheerful resignation of the Christian father, 'Marcus, innocent boy, thou art now among the innocent.' In the Catacombs will not be found one note of scorn or defiance such as we find in the heathen epitaphs.[1]

There are moral bearings in the thought of death; it is the wages of sin. There are dim suggestions of eternal separations from love and joy and God. And all this mystery of light, and mystery of darkness, has been poured into the cup of death by Jesus Christ. Death has strange meanings for the humblest now that it had not for the wisest before Jesus came. Christ has intensified its mystery a thousandfold.

(3) Or take the thought of *God*. We know God through the Lord Jesus Christ. All that we know of God from outward nature, and all that we gather from the world's long history, is but the out work and flanking of that revelation which is ours through the life and death

[1] J. Burns.

of Jesus. But is God less mysterious to us in the light of that revelation of Christ Jesus? 'God without mystery were not good news.' God was a Sovereign once, now He is Father, and there are more mysteries in Fatherhood than in Kingship. God was a God of power once; He is a God of love now; and all the power of all the thunderbolts of Jove are not so mysterious as the slightest spark of love. And God was alone once, or there were many Gods. Now, baffling comprehension, yet most real, we have a vision of Three in One and One in Three. Christ has intensified the mystery of God.

The Christian view is always the deepest view. The Lord who inspired it saw kingdoms in mustard-seeds. They tell us that to see the unusual we ought to travel. But perhaps a better way to see it is to be Christ's. For it is then that life, and death, and human hearts, and all things break into glories of meaning unsuspected. It is then, too, that a man becomes humble. Touched by a sense of mystery, he must be reverent. And it is then that he begins again to wonder. Expect surprises. Believe that there are more things in heaven and earth than have been dreamed of in your philosophies. And then, when common actions are irradiated, and common lives flash into moral glories, when the mysteries of life, and love, and death, and God, so baffle us that we can only say with Paul 'we know in part'—we shall be nearer the spirit of Jesus than we dreamed.

Christian Agnosticism

1 Cor. xiii. 9.—'We know in part.'

1. 'We know in part.' This is most obviously true of each individual and of humanity as a whole. All that any single man knows, he knows only partially, and all that all men together know is but a part.

(1) It is true of our knowledge of the universe as a whole. Little by little, throughout the ages, the universe has disclosed itself to the mind of man as he has been able to appreciate it. The story of science and of philosophy is one of advance by means of incessant re-arrangements of the ideas which, ever and again, have been accepted as final. Since the happy moment when Galileo broke the spell which Aristotle had laid upon the centuries, men of science have been learning how much and how little they know of the universe. The 'atom' came, apparently, to stay for ever. The scientific world was secure in its belief in the atom. But in one day its faith was shaken to pieces by the discovery of radium. The atom has now gone, being replaced by the electron. The existence of matter, of which our fathers were so certain, is now disputed. The knowledge men have acquired of the universe has made them cautious and more modest than formerly. They no longer pretend to be omniscient; they are willing to say humbly, after St Paul, 'We know in part.'

¶ 'All through life,' writes his niece, 'Lord Kelvin retained a wonderful simplicity of character, which endeared him to every one. He had a simple, childlike faith which pervaded his whole being. The deeper he delved into science and the more he studied its mysteries, the greater his veneration for the Maker of all. "We must pause," he said, "face to face with the mystery and miracle of creation. . . . The relations of matter and life are infinitely too complex for the human mind to understand. A tree contains more mystery of creative power than the sun, from which all its mechanical energy is borrowed. An earth without life, a sun, and countless stars, contain less wonder than that sprig of mignonette. . . . Let us not imagine that any hocus-pocus of electricity or viscous fluid will make a living cell."'[1]

(2) It is true of the life around us. The mystery of the universe is not diminished when we turn from the macrocosm to the microcosm; the commonest object of garden or seashore holds as much mystery as the stars. What do we really know of a seed, an egg, or even a stone? We can describe processes and unravel histories, but the complete solution of the mystery of the simplest thing baffles us.

Slight as thou art, thou art enough to hide
Like all created things, secrets from me,
And stand a barrier to eternity.
And I, how can I praise thee well and wide

From where I dwell—upon the hither side?
Thou little veil for so great mystery,

[1] A. G. King, *Kelvin the Man*.

When shall I penetrate all things and thee,
And then look back? For this I must abide,

Till thou shalt grow and fold and be unfurled
Literally between me and the world.
Then I shall drink from in beneath a spring,

And from a poet's side shall read his book.
O daisy mine, what will it be to look
From God's side even of such a simple thing? [1]

(3) It is true of ourselves. Ask the surgeon and the physician if, with all their science and their skill, if with their almost miraculous instruments and their almost incredible achievements, they understand the mystery of disease and of health other than in part. It is with the mind as with the body. It is only now that educationalists are beginning to understand something of the nature of the mind of a child. Modern psychology has unlocked for us the door of an enchanted palace. The human mind, with its puzzling ways of working, is now disclosing itself to us as an orderly world in which law reigns supreme. And yet the psychologist would be the first to declare that, with all the new light that has come, he knows only in part.

With the 'heart' the difficulty is greater. Here is a world which moralists and romancists have been engaged in exploring since the days of old Egypt, and the 'clearing' has scarcely yet begun. Love and hatred, attraction and repulsion, passion and calm, the springs of joy and sorrow, exaltation and depression, the 'flight of the solitary to the solitary'—who yet, after these millenniums of experience, will say that he has surprised the mystery of the human soul?

(4) It is pre-eminently true of our knowledge of God and of Christ. How can our limited minds conceive of the mystery of the Divine Being 'who fills heaven and earth'? Clouds and darkness are about Him—darkness which is excess of light. And who has yet fully known Jesus Christ? If the greatest of the apostles could say, towards the close of his strenuous life, 'I follow after . . . that I may know him,' what can the lesser apostles in all ages say? The fact that our own generation has witnessed the most extraordinary output of literature relating to Jesus Christ and His work is one proof that Christ is so great that no one man, nor any one system, nor all systems together, can completely comprehend Him.

This fact of our severe limitation seems at first to be a humiliation. In reality it is our glory. The animals have made no mental progress. To them, as to their ancestors, the universe is limited to provender and play. But man advances from stage to stage. His knowledge ever grows, and this growth is his glory. The infinite awaits him.

¶ Peter Bell in Wordsworth's poem speaks of the villages in Yorkshire nestling in their narrow valleys, beneath the close crowding hills.

> Where deep and low the hamlets lie,
> Beneath their little patch of sky,
> And little lot of stars.

It is a very little patch of the broad heavens of the love of God that any one mind sees, a very little lot of stars out of that marvellous constellation we call Jesus Christ that swims into the ken of any generation. But as humanity slowly climbs the hills of time higher and higher out of the fogs and the cramped narrowness, ampler and ampler grows that all encompassing sky, more and more marvellous lights that had lain hidden rise and shine down upon their bewildered eyes. Yes, but how much there is still unseen.[1]

2. These, then, are the facts. Let us look now at their implications. Four things, at least, seem to be implied in the consideration of these facts.

(1) They rebuke intellectual vanity. The vice of specialism to-day is conceit. The vastness of the field of knowledge compels most men to choose one single and small department, and to devote their entire attention to it. In one particular field a man may become an expert, and his discoveries may have the tendency to intoxicate him with pride, and to lead him to speak contemptuously of workers in other departments. Haeckel, for example, an acknowledged expert in his own line, was frank enough to say that he was not an historian nor a philosopher. Yet, strangely enough, in his *Riddle of the Universe*, he strayed into paths which were wholly unfamiliar to him,

[1] Alice Meynell.

[1] A. J. Gossip, *In Christ's Stead*, 124.

and attacked with unexampled bad taste some of his fellow-scientists who did not share his outworn materialistic ideas. We have to remember that we know only in part, and we must not mistake that part for the whole. And above all let us not be guilty of the unpardonable folly of denying the reality of any part claimed to be known by another, but which we may not know. Intellectual vanity is a stupid and offensive thing.

(2) They rebuke religious bigotry. When Balak called for Baalam to curse Israel, he placed him at a point where he could see 'part' of the people. Which thing is a parable. Men who see only a part are generally most liberal with their maledictions. The tragedy of our small sects to-day is the result of failure to understand that 'we know only in part.' But we rejoice that there is an effort now being made to find a synthesis of our differing beliefs and practices. The Churches are comprehending that each body has made its contribution to the common faith and life, and that our urgent need is for an understanding of each other.

¶ Not long ago I stood face to face with a pillar at Sarnath, which dates from the reign of a great Indian Emperor who lived long before London was born or thought of. The policy and government of the Emperor Asoka were pre-eminently up to date in their ideals of liberty and progress. The Press did not exist, but pillars with inscriptions took its place, and on these the Emperor published edicts and guided the thoughts of his people. Here is one of them:

'A man must not disparage the sect of another man without reason.'[1]

(3) They call for respect for what others see. The old story of the knights and the shield tells how each man quarrelled with his neighbour because the aspect of the shield differed to each beholder who saw it on a different side. All the sides are necessary to the shield and each beholder must respect what his neighbour sees. We see in the sky the Great Bear, but the Australian sees the Southern Cross. Yet what madness it would be if northerners and southerners excommunicated each other because in their respective charts of the heavens they included only the stars with which they were familiar. God's heavens are too vast to be scanned completely by any pair of eyes at any one time. We must allow for what others see. It is in the *total* experience of Christian people that we gain anything like a broad view of what the Christian life is.

¶ In their loftiest moods of inspiration, the Catholic Thomas à Kempis, the Puritan Milton, the Anglican Keble, rose above their peculiar tenets, and 'above the limits that divide denominations, into the higher regions of a common Christianity.' It was the Baptist Bunyan who taught the world that there was 'a common ground of communion, which no difference of external rites could efface.' It was the Moravian Gambold who wrote:

> The man
> That could surround the sum of things, and spy
> The heart of God and secrets of His empire,
> Would speak but love. With love the bright result
> *Would change the hue of intermediate things,*
> *And make one thing of all theology.*[1]

(4) The fact that we know only in part demands that somewhere and at some time the whole shall be disclosed. The part calls for the whole; it is a prophecy of the whole. The perfect must exist. We cannot think otherwise. Then, says St Paul, 'we shall see face to face.' Meanwhile let us hold on to this fact, that if we know in part we really know. We have light enough to walk by, to live by, to love by, to serve by.

[1] F. T. Woods, *Great Tasks and Great Inspirations*, 75.

The Partial and the Perfect

1 Cor. xiii. 10.—'But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.'

WHAT St Paul says here amounts practically to this: change, he declares, is in the nature of things and inevitable, but the changes that are sure to come we need not fear to see, for this simple but sufficient reason, that the change is always from the fragmentary to the complete, from the partial to the perfect. This, of course, holds good only for the Christian. It is obviously *not* true to say that for everybody every change is for the better. The decay of the outward man may be a prophecy of enrichment to the person whose inward man

[1] R. E. Prothero, *The Life of A. P. Stanley, D.D.*, ii. 243.

is being renewed day by day. But it is sheer loss to the person who has not an inward man waiting to emerge into free and unshackled life. It is only to those who love God that all things work together for good. For the Christian changes make not for impoverishment, but for enrichment. The partial disappears only to make way for the perfect; the second best disappears only because the best is at the door. And that is why we should not grieve when in the Providence of God we are deprived of this cherished possession or that, because God takes a good thing away only to substitute a better in its place. One of the glories of the springtime is the flowering of our fruit-trees. The blossoming of the apple-trees makes a picture in which every one with the least bit of the artist's soul within him cannot help but rejoice. But when the blossoms fall we do not break our hearts about it; in fact we would not keep the blossoms on even if we could. The blossom is preliminary to, and prophetic of, the fruit. And when it falls it is that the fruit may come.

There is an old and familiar saying which enshrines the same truth at the heart of it, to this effect: 'When the half-gods go, the gods arrive.' It teaches exactly the same lesson. The half-god goes! It often means a wrench, and leaves us with a sense of deprivation. But the half-god goes only that the god may come. The partial makes way for the perfect: the second best for the best.

1. *The History of Life.*—The history of life in our world illustrates the truth that God's method is always from good to better and better to best. Modern science has radically and completely changed our ideas about the beginning of life. We no longer believe that the world—at the very beginning of things—was stocked with a certain number of living creatures whose shapes and forms were for ever stereotyped and fixed. Science takes us back to the 'primeval slime,' to protoplasm, to the amœba, to life in its simplest, most primitive and most elementary form. From that humble beginning all the life upon our earth has come. The various forms of life we see are the result of an evolution extending over measureless time. The various types of creatures we know are the result of an age-long struggle for existence. It is only the fittest that have survived. The buried years are littered with the remains of extinct and perished creatures. They perished because other and better forms of life had been evolved. Throughout the ages there has been what Drummond calls an 'ascent of life.' The inferior has been giving way to the superior, the second best to the best, until at last life has come to its crown and consummation in the life of man.

2. *The History of Human Institutions.*—The truth that is illustrated in the history of life is illustrated also in the history of human institutions. This age of ours may have all the faults and failings that Dean Inge attributes to it, nevertheless it is the best age the world has known. Changes are rapid and frequent amongst us. Some of them may be mistaken changes. But, on the whole, we may believe with Tennyson that the world is sweeping into a younger day. Now, in the process of the suns many venerable institutions have perished. But they have perished only because something better has come to take their place. Slavery was a mighty institution in the ancient world; it has gone, and free service has taken its place. Patriarchal judgment was the rule in the ancient world; it has gone, and the administration of an impartial law has taken its place. Absolute monarchy was the rule in the ancient world; to a large extent it has gone, and government by the consent of the governed has taken its place. Numbers of institutions, useful in their day, have perished. Perhaps at the time of their passing men's hearts almost stood still with fear. They talked, as indeed they do still, about 'the end of all things.' But looking back from our vantage-ground we can see that the change meant not loss, but gain. The old institution passed only because a better was waiting to take its place.

> Man must pass from old to new,
> From vain to real, from mistake to fact,
> From what once seemed good, to what now proves best.
> How could man have progression otherwise? [1]

3. *The Progress of Thought.*—We can illustrate the same truth from the progress of Christian thought. The forms in which Christian truth

[1] Browning.

is expressed vary from age to age. Doctrines which in one age are regarded as fundamental to the faith are cast away and discarded by the next. The centuries are strewn with the remains of rejected dogmas. No doubt many godly people felt that if these dogmas went religion would go too. We know now that their fears were groundless. The old forms perished only because purer and nobler forms of belief were waiting to take their place. Their disappearance meant not loss, but gain. Take the great doctrine of the Atonement, for example. In the early Christian centuries the Fathers almost without exception looked upon the sufferings of Jesus as a ransom paid to the Devil. Later theologians taught that they were an expiation offered to an angry God—so much suffering endured as an equivalent for human sin. To-day we think not so much of the physical suffering as of the perfect obedience and the perfect love revealed in the Cross. The changes as they occurred troubled many; the citadel of the faith seemed in process of surrender; but we recognize to-day that we have been receiving fuller light; the partial has been making place for the more perfect.

¶ Some noble souls are ever dropping into the conviction that at last their pilgrimage after truth is ended. A creed that is anything more than a milestone is a blunder. We must get accustomed to the truth that the mind, with ever-widening experience, must ever change the horizon of belief.[1]

¶ To hold the same views at forty as we held at twenty is to have been stupefied for a score of years, and take rank, not as a prophet, but as an unteachable brat, well birched and none the wiser. It is as if a ship captain should sail to India from the port of London; and, having brought a chart of the Thames on deck at his first setting out, should ultimately use no other for the whole voyage.[2]

From the testimony of history we may take to ourselves the comfort that gain will be the net result of our present upheaval and unrest. It is a very anxious and distressful time. Many hearts are sorely troubled about the attacks made upon some of our most venerable beliefs. And there is every excuse for their anxiety, for some of the ideas that are set forward assail the very foundations of the Christian faith. And yet we may view the future with confidence. The ultimate result will not be loss but gain. For no truth is going to perish. That is the quality of truth—no weapon formed against it can prosper. Possibly some of the forms in which we state our truth may have to be altered. But the alteration will be for the better. The issue of every time of controversy and unrest has been a purer and nobler faith. There is one verse from the old Book we may take for our comfort just now, and it is this: 'Thine heart shall fear and be *enlarged*.' These times of panic and distress always issue in enrichment and enlargement. Nothing good or true is going to perish.

> Truth, crush'd to earth, shall rise again,
> The eternal years of God are hers:
> While error, wounded, writhes in pain,
> And dies amid his worshippers.

4. *The Personal Life.*—Let us pass on now from the realm of thought to consider this truth as illustrated in the region of personal life and experience. Here, it must be confessed, we have to walk by faith and not by sight. When it comes to the individual life and to taking stock of the effect of the various changes that befall us, it is impossible mathematically to demonstrate that they issue in gain. We can only believe that God will act in accordance with the character He reveals on the broad plain of history, and point out certain facts in individual experience that go to ratify and confirm that faith. Let us always remember that God is essentially a giving God. He does not delight in taking away. It would be a contradiction of everything about God revealed in history and in the Cross to think that He takes any pleasure in inflicting deprivation and loss upon His people. God's deprivations are meant to prepare for greater bestowments. For instance, He took Joseph away from the home where he had been petted and fondled. It seemed sheer loss at the time; but it issued in gain, for he became the ruler of Egypt and the means of saving his father's house. He took away from Judah Uzziah, the great and mighty King, and so robbed Isaiah of his earthly prop and hope. It seemed sheer loss at the time; but it issued in gain, for, instead of building on Uzziah, Isaiah learned to build on Almighty God.

[1] E. P. Powell.
[2] R. L. Stevenson.

Now, may not these serve as illustrations of the Divine working? As life progresses many things are taken away from us. But God's intention is not impoverishment, but enrichment. The lesser had to be taken away before the greater and better blessing could be conferred. It often happens, does it not, that a man's worldly happiness and comfort have to be shattered before he is led to seek the peace of God? It often happens that it is the loss of human friendship that makes men seek a friend in the unchanging God. It often happens that it is the withdrawal of human love that makes men shelter in that great love from which neither death nor life can ever separate us. And that is not loss, however hard the experience may be, which brings more of God into our lives. If a man suffers the loss of all things but gains Christ, he is no loser. If the departure of earthly friends causes a man to make a friend of Jesus, he is no loser. If the loss of human love makes a man comprehend the length and breadth of the love of God, he is no loser. The changes the years bring were not meant to leave us poorer, they were meant to lead us into an ever-growing experience of the love and grace of God.

5. *The Life to Come.*—Lastly, this truth holds good of the life to come. That is the mightiest change of all—when a man says farewell to this familiar world. But that too is a change for the better. It is when this broken, partial, fettered life ends that the perfect life begins.

¶ 'Douglas,' said a young Scottish nobleman, as he lay dying, to the brother who was to succeed him in the title, 'Douglas, you will soon become a duke, but I shall be a king!' That is it; even in the last change God is giving us silver for our iron, and gold for our brass. That which is 'in part is taken away, that that which is perfect may come.'[1]

The saints have never been unwilling to part with the present. 'I have a desire to depart and be with Christ,' says St Paul. 'Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus,' cries St John. And the reason for their willingness to be gone is that they knew the life on the other side was so much richer and fuller. And we need not shrink or fear when our time comes. No! there is no need to wish to be taken. This life is a good life, and we ought to cherish it. But we ought not to shrink or fear when called upon to leave it. For 'to die is gain.' We enter straight

> Another golden chamber of the king's,
> Larger than this we leave and lovelier.

That is the uniform testimony of the Bible. Richer, fuller, more abundant life is our portion in the world to come. At the best we are crippled and hampered and limited here; we cannot be what we want to be or do what we would; but there life is abundant, strength is sufficient, joy is constant.

A thrush sang in the afternoon,
When New Year's Day was waning,
A little, tender, elfin tune,
His dream of spring explaining;
And in that small prophetic lay
I heard the madrigals of May.

A daisy flowered beside the path—
The snows had just released her—
When all the threats that winter hath
Were in the wild nor'-easter;
Unharmed, she promised halcyon hours,
Rich summer and a world of flowers.

In hints and gleams of hope we rest,
Our own brief foretastes making,
When Death hath done his worst—and best—
To perfect knowledge waking,
We shall discern, past sun and star,
How lovely God's fulfilments are![1]

[1] J. D. Jones, *The Gospel of the Sovereignty*, 44.

Childish Things

1 Cor. xiii. 11.—'When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.'

THE Apostle rejoiced that he had escaped from childhood and become a man. Yet Jesus, desiring to illustrate some of the most profound truths of religion, set a child in the midst and told His disciples to become as little children. There is a difficulty here which needs to be cleared up, and the solution of it is found if we adopt the familiar and conventional distinction between childlikeness and childishness. We speak of childlikeness when we wish to indicate those qualities of childhood which are winsome and beautiful, such as innocence, wonder,

[1] M. R. Jarvis.

confidence, and trust. We speak of childishness when we wish to indicate those features in the life of a child which must be tolerated for the time being in the hope that gradually they will pass away. We have no authentic record of the infancy of Jesus to enable us to discover whether He was ever childish, and the Apocryphal Gospels too obviously weight the evidence on the other side. But to the end of life Jesus was childlike, moving about in the world as a child in His Father's house, wondering at its beauty, awed by its mystery, reposing His soul completely on God. The childlike heart He enjoined upon His disciples, and St Paul, the greatest of them, retained it all his days. But the things that were childish St Paul put away.

According to this interpretation, life for St Paul was an experience in which he was evermore advancing towards the ideal of manhood, that manhood which he had seen in all its richness and splendour revealed in Jesus Christ. This is, indeed, God's plan of life for us all. The passage towards the close of St Paul's wonderful hymn of love in which he speaks of these things is usually understood as referring to the life to come, in which we shall see no longer darkly but face to face. But real Christian manhood is a condition of life to be achieved in this world, and we move towards it by a process of development in the course of which we leave behind all childish things.

What, then, are some of these childish things which we are to put away?

1. *Instinct.*—If from this point of view we investigate the life of a little child, we observe, in the first place, that it is guided in all its actions by instinct. A child is a creature of instincts, instincts of the most diverse and complex kinds, which it has inherited from the past. A child has its wants and desires, its cravings and impulses, its whims and caprices, and in the early stages it has very little else. A child does not act from a reasoned conviction, or in pursuance of an ordered plan, or with any well-defined intention. Its instincts are the raw material out of which character will one day be fashioned, but at present its inner life is formless and its instincts are strong, clamant, insistent. The new psychology has revealed to us how strong the instincts are, and how long their influence persists in our lives. But one mark of a true Christian manhood is that the life is no longer guided entirely by instinct, but much more by principles of conduct, in accordance with which the will directs activity. The life of mere instinct is a childish thing, which a man will more and more put away as he advances into a life rationally and religiously controlled. When a man begins to act according to principles of conduct, he finds that these principles lead him to correct some of his instincts, to suppress others, to control and regulate them all. Fortunately it is not necessary for every man to search afresh for such principles. The wisdom of experience is at hand to help him. The knowledge of the art of life acquired by humanity on its journey down the centuries is at his disposal. There are principles which have been tested by man through the centuries, which have been proved to be valid, which do, as a matter of fact, lead to blessedness and inward peace. The Christian sees these principles as they are embodied in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. Guided by them he puts away the life of mere instinct, which is a childish thing, and advances into the higher and richer experience of the Christian man.

2. *Fear.*—A child is haunted by fear. Few people realize how large a part fear plays in the life of a child. If allowance be not made for this childish weakness, permanent injury may be done, and it is almost criminal to increase the element of fear in the life of a child, as some parents do. The average child is afraid in the dark, because to its childish imagination the darkness is peopled with all kinds of invisible foes, which may suddenly leap forth to its hurt.

¶ As a child, I was once sitting at dinner with my parents reading an old bound-up *Saturday Magazine*, looking at the pictures, and waiting for dessert. I turned a page, and saw a picture of a Saint, lying on the ground, holding up a cross, and a huge and cloudy fiend with vast bat-like wings bending over him, preparing to clutch him, but deterred by the sacred emblem. That was a really terrible shock. I turned the page hastily and said nothing, though it deprived me of speech and appetite. My father noticed my distress, and asked if I felt unwell, but I said 'No.' I got through dessert somehow; but then I had to

say good-night, go out into the dimly-lit hall, slip the volume back into the book-case, and get upstairs. I tore up the staircase, feeling the air full of wings and clutching hands. That was too bad ever to be spoken of; and as I did not remember which volume it was, I was never able to look at the set of magazines again for fear of encountering it.[1]

A young child is afraid of strange and peculiar people and, indeed, of anything which is a departure from the narrow and normal experience of its daily life. Sometimes children are afraid of consequences because they have an imperfect sense of the right proportion of things. Some of these fears persist into later life in the form of superstitions. Such fear is childish and ought to be put away, and we shall put it away as we advance more and more into a true Christian manhood. For the life of the Christian is a life of inward tranquillity, due to his confidence in God, in the God whom Jesus has revealed to us as our Father, who loves us and cares for us and orders all things for our spiritual and eternal good. If we really believe in such a God, we shall no longer think of the world as governed by chance or caprice, but as an ordered and intelligible world, the handiwork of God. Reaching forth with our trembling hand in faith to this God, we touch Him, and find our hand grasped by One who is mighty. Walking along life's difficult way in dependence on this God, we gradually accumulate a store of faith, until we become confident that, as He has upheld us in the past, so He will be with us to life's end.

My wee one walked the narrow wall—
  What child but hungers thus to go?—
Her eyes alert lest she might fall
  On that rough-bouldered pave below.
At length she stopped, and this her plea,
  As though o'er full of care her cup:
'Please, Daddy, hold my hand for me,
  So when I walk I can look up.'
All-Father, when we walk the ways
  That teem with pitfalls for our feet,
That baby plea of bygone days
  Might in our woeful need be meet.
Tired out with watchfulness and care,
  With strife for paltry bite and sup,
'Thou hold our hands,' we make our prayer,
  'That while we walk we may look up.'

[1] A. C. Benson, *Where No Fear Was*, 42.

3. *Appearances.*—A child is also deceived by appearances. Sometimes it is pathetic, sometimes it is amusing to see how easily a child can be deceived. A child has no correct sense of value, no reliable judgment as to whether an article is genuine or artificial, of real value or only of meretricious worth. If, before the days when we began to live on paper, one offered to a child three or four years old a very bright penny and a very dull sovereign, there was little doubt which he would choose. In the realm of conduct also a child cannot distinguish between the false and the true, between a plausible scoundrel and a good man. This liability to be deceived is a childish thing, but we shall the more quickly be able to put it away if we submit ourselves to Jesus Christ and allow ourselves to be taught and guided by Him. For He will remove the veil from our heart and cleanse the vision of our soul so that we shall be able to see things as they really are. He will give us the power of estimating life's values aright. The disciple who is growing into Christian manhood does so by gradually acquiring spiritual vision, ability to see beneath the surface of things, and the faculty of judging not by the appearance merely. Temptation, for example, may one day meet him in a very attractive form, richly coloured, glittering, alluring. Were he a child, spiritually he might be deceived. But as a Christian man who has put away the childish liability to be deceived by appearances he knows that what he sees before him is deceptive, that the hopes held out by it are illusory, that the delights offered by it turn at last to bitterness. Were he to fall, it would be with his eyes open. But he stands fast, and then passes on his way stronger because he has resisted the evil, and with his faith in the simplicity and sobriety of virtue confirmed.

4. *Selfishness.*—Once more, a little child is animated by selfishness. The infant is all for itself; its life is entirely self-centred. Self-will, it has been ascertained, appears before the first month of life is past, and for a time a child's desires are concerned solely with its own welfare. Tennyson has told us in well-known lines that

The baby new to earth and sky,
  What time his tender palm is prest
  Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that 'this is I.'

That is no doubt true in a philosophical sense, and very interesting it is to watch for the dawn of self-consciousness. Fichte, the eminent philosopher, gave a dinner party to celebrate the occasion on which his child first uttered the personal pronoun 'I' with conscious meaning. But from the beginning children are unconscious egotists. The legend of the youthful Narcissus, who spent all his time contemplating his image reflected in a pool, is applicable to the life of a child. But this self-centredness is a childish thing, which a man should put away, and which he will assuredly put away if he surrenders his life to Jesus Christ.

¶ George Eliot describes an ancient silver mirror, on which, if one brought a candle near, the multitudinous fine lines, wrought by much polishing, arranged themselves in concentric circles around the light of the candle flame. So to a mean man the large interests of human kind centre about his self. *Self-centred* is the exact description of his life.[1]

The new birth, in the Christian meaning of the term, is an experience in which a man moves from a view of life which has self at the centre to a new view of life which has Christ at the centre. The Christian man comes to think of others, to accept responsibility for others. His life is motived not by selfishness but by love. As he grows into an ever deeper and richer Christian manhood, the circle of his interest widens, passing far beyond his own family, out into the community, away to the ends of the earth, embracing the whole race of mankind. The childish selfishness is swallowed up and lost in the experience of that larger life into which love guides him, the life which finds its constraint in the Divine love revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Other Side of Eight

For the Young

1 Cor. xiii. 11.—'When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.'

In one of his essays, Sir Richard Steele, who lived two hundred years ago, describes a visit he paid to an old friend, in whose house he was always heartily welcomed by all the inmates, and not least by the children. One could well imagine that Dick Steele would be a favourite with children. 'The boys and girls,' he says, 'strive who shall come first when they think it is I that am knocking at the door.' Referring later on to the youngest child of the household, he says, 'I found upon conversation with him, though he was a little noisy in his mirth, that the child had excellent parts, and was a great master of all the learning on the other side of eight years old.'

'The learning on the other side of eight'—that is the interesting phrase. What Steele meant would be something like this—that his young friend was skilled in the games that occupied his restless energy, eager to lead, joyous in his play, yet solemn, too, as only a child can be, 'flinging himself into the business of the moment,' as Robert Louis Stevenson puts it, 'with that superior earnestness that properly belongs to play.'

Now, what we want to say is more for the boys and girls who are on *this* side of eight years old. Some of you are about ten or twelve, or even in your teens. Perhaps you could help those of us who are a long way on this side to realize better than we do that somewhat mysterious region on the other side of eight. You have not long crossed the border, and should have a better recollection and understanding of it than we older people, to some of whom it is now a land that is very far off.

With all our ignorance, however, there are some things that even the oldest of us can say about it, and perhaps can say best the older we are.

1. We *forget* much of the learning on the other side of eight. We, too, knew all about it once, we understood its views and sympathized with them, but somehow there is so much that we cannot recall that belonged to that enchanted period. The child's mind is a wonder, largely unknown to us grown-ups. How it thinks, how it forms its opinions, are processes which we who are far on this side of eight find it difficult to understand.

A missionary in China once said that he would give a year's salary to get for five minutes at the back of a Chinaman's mind. It is as difficult in some ways to get at the back of a child's mind, and that is so even though we have passed through a similar stage ourselves.

[1] H. E. Fosdick, *The Meaning of Service*, 90.

There is mist and mystery to us who have long crossed the border. Robert Louis Stevenson, much more than most, kept to the end his understanding of childhood, but even he speaks of 'the last lights of the child's imagination'—like the last lights of the street lamps being put out in the early dawn. It may not be exactly eight, but somewhere thereabouts the lights dwindle and die out, and there comes a forgetting.

2. Though all that is true, however, it is not all the truth. There is much also that we *remember* that dates back to the other side of eight. Nothing is more lasting than some of our early impressions. Some things told us in childhood are imprinted for life upon the memory, even things we did not actually experience, but which we heard about with eager, listening ears.

¶ Sir James Barrie says there were stories he heard from his mother—stories about *her* life—that he remembers more clearly than events that had really taken place in his own boyhood. 'I have seen many on-dings of snow,' he says, 'but the one I seem to recollect best occurred nearly twenty years before I was born.'

It is very important, therefore, to have happy and helpful impressions in those years. Some know the harm an early fright may do, the effects lasting all through life; so, too, with anything that saddens a child's spirit even though it may be a mistakenly sombre idea on the child's part.

¶ Kate Greenaway, the artist of child life, says that the church bells from earliest childhood spoke to her of 'an undefined mournfulness lying somewhere in the background of the world of life and beauty.' The first time she had heard them tolling was for the passing of some poor soul, and ever after that they took the joy out of her day for all their assumption at other times of a gayer mood. They might ring in a lively way for a festive occasion, but that first sad impression could not be obliterated.

We can hardly expect to be treated as Mozart was treated by his father, who arranged that the child should be awakened each morning by a soft strain of music. Some of us have had, and needed, a rather rough awakening in our time ere we got out of the grip of the night's sleep. But, on the whole, gentle and kindly and happy ways of dealing with a child have an effect for good that will remain through all the after life.

3. But while we forget much, and also remember much, it is further true that we *outgrow* much on the other side of eight—'put away,' in St Paul's phrase. 'To live is to outlive,' someone has said. How true that is, not only of childhood, but all through life! We are always outliving, always outgrowing. Some kinds of outgrowing come naturally and with no difficulty. You outgrow them as you do your clothes. But with others it may be a lifelong endeavour to succeed. We feel that we ought to succeed, but it is a hard matter.

You boys and girls are no more than out of your childhood. You have left some of its ways behind you already. The important days of youth are now in front. See to it that you so enter upon them and go through them, that you may not have evil and hurtful ways to outlive, and that you may have much of the good ways that we trust you will never outlive. For there is a growing-in as well as a growing-out that is important. May it be yours to 'grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ'—

Mayst thou live to know and fear Him,
Trust and love Him all thy days,
Then go dwell for ever near Him,
See His face and sing His praise.

The Heaven of the Intellect

1 Cor. xiii. 12.—'For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.'

THESE words are remarkable as coming from the Apostle Paul. No writer of the New Testament possessed more calm and constant assurance than he; he was naturally of a dogmatic turn of mind, and he was conscious of living in the blaze of a great new revelation. Yet this is the man who says that 'we see through a glass, darkly.' The acknowledgment comes with extraordinary force from such lips. To hear St Paul uttering it is as touching as to see a strong man weeping.

The text places in contrast two things: (1) the present limitation of knowledge; (2) its future expansion.

1. There are three ways in which, in this text, St Paul expresses his sense of the limitation of our present knowledge.

(1) 'We see through a glass.' It is a little doubtful what is meant by 'a glass.' It may be a pane of glass; and, if so, it must be remembered that the glass of the ancients was not as clear and transparent as ours, but rough and dim; and what is meant is that spiritual and eternal things are to us at present like objects seen through such a semi-transparent medium: they are like a landscape seen by moonlight, when everything is indistinct, half-revealed and half-concealed. But more probably he means by 'a glass' a looking-glass or mirror; and the reason why he says 'through' instead of 'in' a glass is because, when looking into a mirror, we seem to see the objects 'through' it—that is, as far away on the opposite side as they really are on this side of the surface. The idea, in this case, would be that at present we do not see spiritual and eternal things themselves, but only shadows and reflections of them. We are like the Lady of Shalott, in Tennyson's well-known poem, who was under a spell by which she was prevented from turning round and looking out on the world through her window, but in a mirror hanging on the wall of her room could always see reflected the neighbouring highway, along which the knights were passing, and the river, thronged with barges bearing their variegated freights to and fro. Plato has the same idea. We are, he says, like men sitting spellbound in a cave, with their backs to the opening, who cannot turn round, but on the opposite wall see the shadows of the figures passing by outside in the sun.

(2) We see 'darkly.' This translation, however, is a very inadequate rendering of the original, which signifies literally 'in an enigma' or 'in a riddle.' At present, he says, we see the things of God in such a way as only to be able to guess what their actual form is. Perhaps the best clue to what this means may be found in the preceding verse, which says: 'When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.' There are many important subjects about which we cannot speak to children directly. We speak in pictures, which are the best representations of the realities the children can get at the time. What St Paul hints is that, when we reach the next stage of existence, our conceptions will undergo the same transmutation as does our knowledge of this world when we pass from childhood to manhood.

¶ We know that the invisible world cannot be duly discerned, or perfectly appreciated. We know that we see as in a glass darkly; but still we look on the glass. We frame to ourselves some image which we know to be incomplete, which probably is in part untrue, which we try to improve day by day, of which we do not deny the defects—but which nevertheless is our 'all'; which we hope, when the accounts are taken, may not be found utterly unlike the known reality. This is, as it seems, the best religion for finite beings, living, if we may say so, on the very edge of two dissimilar worlds.[1]

(3) We know 'in part.' We are all Agnostics in a very real sense; and the fuller knowledge, when it comes, will not only supplement that which we at present possess, but correct it, just as the daylight, when it enters a partially lighted room, not only reveals many objects not seen before, but imparts a different aspect even to those already perceived. In things Divine we have not only much to learn but much to unlearn.

Such are the picturesque forms in which St Paul expresses a truth which every one has felt in his own degree according to the depth of his own nature and the intensity of his reflections. There is no direction in which the mind can turn but it soon comes up against an insurmountable wall of mystery. Is it God Himself we desire to know? 'Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?' When we say that there are three Persons in one God, we are not going beyond what we are entitled to say, but how little do we know of the realities behind these terms! The words are algebraic symbols, standing for magnitudes of which we have little conception. Or, when we say of our Saviour that He is both God and man, we are not going beyond what Scripture makes us bound to say; yet any child can, thereupon, suggest puzzles which the wisest cannot solve. The mystery is hardly a whit less profound if from God we turn to ourselves. We know, for example, by the direct testimony of consciousness that the will is free; yet, when we study what is known of heredity, how impossible it seems to deter-

[1] W. Bagehot, *Literary Studies*.

mine where freedom ends and necessity begins! Darkest of all is the mystery of sin. Whence comes this heritage in which we all participate? It is like a great black pit in the centre of humanity, out of which are constantly emerging shapes of monstrosity, which confound the harmony of Nature and wreck the progress of the world. How is it that we ourselves are able to do things at which, when they are done, we stand aghast, as if they were the work of another? How is it that we can so clearly see and approve what is right, and yet be so feeble in turning our knowledge into action? There are many mysteries, but this is the most baffling of them all.

2. Let us turn from this limitation to its contrast, the future expansion of knowledge.

(1) The knowledge of the future will be 'face to face.' At present we sit spellbound, seeing the pageant in a mirror, whilst we cannot turn round; but then the spell will be broken, and we shall turn round and stand face to face with the realities. This vision is a prospect which may inspire not only the thinker thirsting for knowledge, but all who know anything of the pain and joy, the hope and fear of moral struggle. Do we not all, in this struggle, often wonder why spiritual and eternal things exercise over us so faint and wavering a sway? Now and then, indeed, when our vision of them is extra clear, they transport us with their excellence and make all other prizes and enjoyments appear tame in comparison. But soon the mist slips in between again, and we are astonished that we are so little impressed by what we wish to impress us so much. This is, however, largely due to the imperfection of our present knowledge: we do not see the things as they are, and, therefore, they do not impress adequately. But when we shall see them face to face, it will be different: then they will exercise over us their full and legitimate influence. One look of the Saviour 'face to face' will cause such a current of love to flow through the soul that no evil thing can stand in its course. 'We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.'

¶ When we speak of things so much above our comprehension as the employment and happiness of a future state, doubtless it behoves us to speak with all modesty and distrust of ourselves. But the scripture represents the happiness of that state under the notions of *seeing God, seeing Him as He is, knowing as we are known, and seeing face to face.* These words are not general or undetermined, but express a particular, determinate happiness. And I will be bold to say that nothing can account for, or come up to these expressions, but only this, that God Himself will be an object to our faculties, that He Himself will be our happiness.[1]

(2) We shall know 'even as also we are known.' Usually this is interpreted to mean that we shall then know God as He knows us. But surely this would be an absurd statement: in order to know God as He knows us we should require to be gods ourselves. The meaning rather is that we shall then know ourselves even as He knows us now.

¶ Speaking of God as being infinite in His nature and attributes, he said: 'I cannot grasp this infinity: I am not able to comprehend God; I know but in part. *If I knew Him I would cease to worship Him.*[2]

God knows us altogether: He has in His mind the scheme of our life: He knows why everything befalls us: He knows why the prize we have striven for has been denied, or why we have been stripped of the possession in which we have taken unlimited pride: for He can see the end from the beginning, and is making all things work together for good to them that love Him. We do not yet see, and, therefore, these vicissitudes perplex us and sometimes plunge us into despair. But we shall see, for we shall be placed on a height from which we shall see every object and every event in its true relations and proportions, and the light will fall most brightly on the spots which, as we have passed through them in experience, have been the darkest.

I think if thou couldst see,
With thy dim mortal sight,
How meanings, dark to thee,
Are shadows hiding light;
Truth's efforts crossed and vexed,
Life's purpose all perplexed,—
If thou couldst see them right,
I think that they would seem all clear, and wise,
and bright.[3]

[1] Butler, *Sermons.*
[2] D. Brown, *Memoir of John Duncan*, 248.
[3] Adelaide Procter.

One of the attractions of heaven to St Paul was the increase of knowledge. But probably there are not many minds on which this acts as a motive. The majority are attracted to heaven by the heart rather than the head, because they are expecting to be reunited there to those from whom they have been separated in this world. Some feel the attraction most in the conscience, being weary of the struggle with sin and the clinging presence of a body of death, and longing for a condition of moral perfection. But the intellectual attraction is well fitted to be a strong one too. Many in this world have little opportunity of mental development, like those of whom it was sung :

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll ;
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Such will, in the next life, have ample opportunity to harvest the treasures of the mind which they have missed in this one. Intellects which have been dull and obstructed here will there experience a glorious emancipation ; while those who in this world have been intellectually great, but, like one of the greatest, have felt themselves to be but as children picking up a few shells on the shore of truth while the vast ocean stretched before them, unknown and unexplored, will there have ample leisure and boundless scope for the prosecution of their successful investigations.

¶ Writing to Miss Edith Rix, to whom he dedicated 'A Tangled Tale,' Lewis Carroll says : 'I think I've already noticed, in a way, most of the rest of that letter—except what you say about learning more things " after we are dead." *I* certainly like to think that may be so. But I have heard the other view strongly urged, a good deal based on " then shall we know even as we are known." But I can't believe that that means we shall have *all* knowledge given us in a moment—nor can I fancy it would make me any happier : it is the *learning* that is the chief joy, here, at any rate.' [1]

For the scholar, the thinker, the lover of truth, there is a heaven no less than for the ignorant and the erring ; and an expansion of knowledge, endless and ever growing, is one element in the prize presented to our ambition when we are urged to 'lay hold on eternal life.' For learned and unlearned, nevertheless, there is only one way of attaining the goal. The only way to lay hold on eternal life is to lay a hand of faith on Him who says : 'I am the resurrection and the life ; if a man believe on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die.'

[1] S. D. Collingwood, *The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll*, 251.

Love the Mirror of Immortality

1 Cor. xiii. 12.—'Now we see through a glass darkly.'

The Apostle imagines himself to be looking into a mirror—such as was in use in those days—made of burnished metal. Dimly in the mirror St Paul sees a reflection, which he cannot fully discern. The reflected image is so shadowy and mysterious that it suggests to him the idea of a riddle or puzzle, which must be carefully studied before it can be made out. Such (he says) is the vision of the spiritual world and of the future life which is vouchsafed to our human faculties now. It stands in sharp contrast to the direct vision, the face-to-face vision, which will be vouchsafed to us hereafter. It is dim, puzzling, uncertain in detail.

So far the point of St Paul's illustration is clear. But what does he mean by the mirror itself ? We might answer this question in more than one way : we might say that revelation is the mirror, or that faith is the mirror ; we know from other passages in St Paul's writings that he could have accepted either of these interpretations. But here, if we could reach his inmost thought, we should probably find that his point of view was slightly different, and that by the mirror he meant human love. His mind at the moment is full of the beauty and pre-eminence of human love.

The idea that human love, and especially bereaved human love, may be regarded as a mirror which reflects the image of immortality is still full of suggestiveness. Love, it may be said, is no argument : a feeling is not the same thing as a process of reasoning : our affection for those who have gone from us is not enough, taken by itself, to prove their immortality. Yet is not love, after all, one of the links which find a place in the chain of evidence for a future life ? The evidence for immortality is

cumulative. Our reasoned convictions, our instinctive beliefs, the testimony of conscience, and the voice of revelation all tell in one and the same direction, and the total value of these converging lines of evidence is far weightier than the mere sum of the separate arguments. Love supplies a witness of its own. Love gives us insight.

If we look into the mirror, what do we see?

1. Think of all the love and yearning which, generation after generation, have been felt by human hearts for dear ones lost. Can all this passionate feeling, we ask, have been poured out in vain? Is the loan, when God has reclaimed it from us here, never again to be restored in the world to come? The Christian admits that there is much of which he is absolutely ignorant about the state of the departed. He is content to be ignorant, provided that he can cling to the one all-important truth that they are alive, that they exist somewhere in the universe, and that, wherever they are, they are in God's keeping.

God of the living, in whose eyes,
Unveiled Thy whole creation lies;
All souls are Thine; we must not say
That those are dead who pass away;
From this our world of flesh set free,
We know them living unto Thee.

Not spilt like water on the ground,
Not wrapped in dreamless sleep profound,
Not wandering in unknown despair
Beyond Thy voice, Thine arm, Thy care;
Not left to lie like fallen tree;
Not dead, but living unto Thee.

2. As we look a second time at the image of the future life reflected in the mirror of love, we discern something else. Love refuses to be content with an impersonal immortality. It not merely rejects the thought of annihilation; it also rejects the thought of the absorption of the individual soul, whether into the Being of Nature or into the Being of God. It cries out for the continuance of personality. It yearns for the future recognition of the loved departed. Our Lord Himself after His resurrection invited the Apostles to recognize the persistence of His personal identity after death: 'Behold and see, it is I myself.' Love ponders over this saying, and asks whether our Lord will not permit us also to recognize hereafter those for whose company we long most keenly—those, for example, whom we have personally known and loved, or those great spirits of all time whose thoughts have influenced our lives, or those blessed saints, whether they lived long ago or recently, whose example we have reverenced and tried to follow. How this recognition will take place we do not know.

¶ Was it not reunion that that great man of faith, Robert Browning, looked forward to, with deepest longing, after death? The sorrow and pain of desire, that breathes through all his poetry after his wife's death, breaks once into the unfaltering assurance of those lines:—

O thou soul of my soul, I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest.

To this hope Carlyle clung through all his days. The profoundly touching lines of Lockhart, the biographer of Scott, were often on his lips. Andrew Lang used to quote them with deep feeling, and they show the yearning intensity of hope with which he regarded the future:

But 'tis an old belief
That on some solemn shore,
Beyond the sphere of grief,
Dear friends shall meet once more.

That creed I fain would keep,
That hope I'll not forgo—
Eternal be the sleep
Unless to waken so![1]

3. Look once more into the mirror. Bereaved love has a final and supreme test of its trustfulness to show us. To some people there comes the experience of a moment which is among the most poignant memories of their lives. Love stands sometimes by the grave of one to whose future it cannot, for all its breadth of charity, for all its keenness of sympathy, look forward without some foreboding. Is it a mockery, an unreality, to speak of hope in such cases? Surely that is not so. Hope is exactly the thing which love then specially needs. Love believed everything that was possible of the unrepentant, grace-resisting sinner

[1] J. A. Robertson, *Concerning the Soul*, 204.

while he was yet on earth; and after his death, love, if it cannot believe all things, still hopeth all things.

¶ I once stood looking down at a dead blackguard, who had left a sinister trail of misery behind him through the years, whose character had been a kind of upas tree, the deadly drip of which had poisoned and killed every fair thing upon which its shadow fell. 'Ah, well!' said his wife softly, 'he is at rest now.' One wondered if he were: if all the vivid warnings of the grim consequences of deliberate sin are only nursery tales, with no substance behind them. And then there came a memory of that day when Christ was preaching, and was interrupted by the rending of rafters overhead, the falling dust, and then the sudden sky broke through, and eager heated faces peering down, as they lowered a poor object, too far gone to have a touch of faith himself, before the Master's feet; and how He looked up gratefully, smiled at these hot, resourceful, desperate friends, 'Your faith has saved him,' He said happily; and it did. So, perhaps (God's love is very wonderful, and He seizes upon any loophole), perhaps, that woman's faith and sturdy affection, which years of ill-usage had not killed, might somehow pull him through.[1]

'Through a glass darkly.' In the light of the revelation of Jesus Christ we see with clearness and certainty the general outlines of the great truth of immortality. But the details are beyond our powers of vision: they are 'in a riddle.' Love yearns in vain for some direct communication from the dead, for some definite knowledge of their state. It broods over Dante's great poem, it listens to the *Dream of Gerontius* as interpreted by music, it scrutinizes the reports of the Society for Psychical Research, it reads devotional books which profess to disclose the great secret. But in its heart of hearts love knows that all its efforts are vain.

¶ 'If you ask (said Ward Beecher) why God did not reveal more to us respecting the hereafter, I reply by asking why do not you explain something about the higher side of life to your dog? It could not understand you if you did, and we could not understand what relates to the future if God should explain it to us.' To the fantastic questions which people sometimes ask about heaven it is sufficient to reply, God knows. If we know that God knows, we know all that we need to know. We know, at any rate, enough about heaven for all practical purposes: we know that to attain it we need a spiritual preparation. We know that if we are to see God as He is, we must purify ourselves even as Christ is pure.[1]

Our knowledge of that life is small,
The eye of faith is dim;
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,
And we shall be with Him.

[1] A. J. Gossip, *From the Edge of the Crowd*, 116.

Then Shall We Know

1 Cor. xiii. 12.—'Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.'
Hos. vi. 3.—'Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.'

In the Old Testament the contrast between man and man has been set impressively in a suggestive phrase—those who 'know the Lord' and those who 'know not the Lord.' The men who know the Lord have not only made the venture of faith, they have passed on into the inner shrine of communion and love, and dear and costly loyalties. This distinction has been set in its sharpest outlines on a single page. Samuel hears God's voice in the temple. He responds to the call. He yields his life to God's service. The historian writes the word which explains his experience, 'He knew the Lord.' He writes in a single keen-eyed word of condemnation, 'The sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord.' This experience of knowing the Lord is not completed in a single hour or attained by one decision. As Hosea proclaimed to the penitents of Israel, we must 'follow on to know the Lord.' The individual believer can say of his knowledge, even in his short span of time—

Thou broadenest out with every year,
Each breadth of life to meet.

The Old Testament prophets were pilgrims of the night, waiting and watching for the coming of the dawn. 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises.' Then the morning came. Christ was born in Bethlehem. He spoke with a depth of wisdom they had no ears to hear. The meaning of that life, whose

[1] H. G. Woods, *At the Temple Church*, 176.

simplest deed we now see to have been Divinely beautiful, was greatly hidden from them. His death was an act of such grace and such eternal moment that their poor thoughts fluttered before it. But as scholars in His school they passed on, learning line upon line, precept upon precept. At last they saw His glory. They 'knew the Lord' as Samuel had never dared to dream. 'He that hath seen me,' said Jesus, 'hath seen the Father.' But still they knew only in part.

This experience of knowing the Lord Jesus was not completed even when His disciples had beheld His glory in its fullness of grace and truth. The purpose of the New Testament, as we have it, is to show to us how these men and women entered into the fuller light and the closer fellowship. There are certain definite stages in this enlarging knowledge of the Lord which can be clearly marked. They are set down for us in the New Testament. Let us consider them, then, in their order.

1. The first stage is *the knowledge of the risen Lord.* It is a great gift of God's grace to believe in Christ who lived and died. It is a transforming experience to know Christ who not only died but rose again. The closing pages of the Gospels show us men whose religion was only a tender memory. Its most sacred spot was a grave with a stone set upon it. Their hopes were only the wreck of vanished dreams. Suddenly there rings in the ears of this little band of dispirited men and women the cry, 'The Lord is risen!' These believers then rose up to a new plane of knowledge, whose sublime significances filled them with awe and roused them to rapture. The glory of the risen Lord and the solemn certainty of His haunting presence paled the words and deeds of Galilee and Samaria.

The power of this knowledge of the risen Christ works like a spell. Literature with its prophetic instinct has divined its significance. Even Goethe, tinged though he was by pagan ideals, makes the bells of Easter Sunday morning ring in new hope to the heart of Faust awaiting his doom. Goethe realized that the Lord who rose again victorious over sin and death could bring back the most desperate wrong-doer from the gates of hell. A nobler poet than Goethe has set this truth in a still clearer light. In the poem he calls 'Christmas Eve and Easter Day,' Browning declares that the risen Lord is the fundamental fact of his faith. A doubt which was almost despair had seized upon him. The evidences of the faith no longer held him, and all the offices of its worship in every form provoked distaste. He traces his ascent from that experience of a night of storm on the moor when he saw

> The sight
> Of a sweepy garment, vast and white,
> With a hem that I could recognize,

up to that more splendid certainty when

> The whole face turned upon me full.

Browning had become conscious of the risen Lord, and his words rise to a height of self-forgetting passion that even he seldom attains.

More convincing and more illuminating, perhaps, is the witness of humbler believers—simple men and women who began by seeing only the gentle Jesus of the children's hymn, or dwelling upon the deeds of Him who went about doing good, or rising no higher than to revere the mystic of the Mount of the Beatitudes. In some hour of quiet brooding or on some day of overwhelming sorrow they realized that Christ was risen, and was near, tender, waiting for a word, watching for a look, swift to strengthen and to help. They had followed on to know the risen Lord.

2. The second stage is *the knowledge of the ascended Lord.* We enter a rarer atmosphere here, and we touch a more difficult truth. We are lifting up our eyes to the cloud which received Him out of sight, and seeing the throne above it. Seldom does any young believer, even although assured that Christ is risen, attain with confidence to a sense of the ascended Lord. The early believers grew slowly into that certainty and still more slowly into its power. As it became the sure possession of their hearts, they were almost intoxicated by the thought that Christ is Lord of all. We see Stephen, as he dies in the field of the outcast, lifting his eyes to behold Jesus on the right hand of God. We see Paul in his prison strengthening his soul with the assurance that Christ must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. All the great believers

have seen this sight, and all the most splendid services have been done under its inspiration.

There are times when the one assurance the Church needs is to see Jesus on the right hand of God. There is so much amiss in the world, so much sorrow and pain, and the tears are not wiped away. The victory of righteousness is so costly, so broken, and so slow. Yet even in our dullest hours the vision of our Lord on the throne sends a flood of buoyant energy through our veins.

¶ There is a poem by Walt Whitman which illustrates this power of an assurance of an ascended Lord. He is recalling the famous march of Sherman through Georgia to the sea. He remembers that, when a soldier in the ranks, he passed an old, half-blind negro woman sitting by the roadside. Never did she expect to see freedom given to her race. But as the soldiers passed on in their victorious march she realized in her own poor wondering way that a new power was ruling in the land, and that, however long and blood-stained the struggle might yet be, the end of it was liberty to the slave.

Who are you dusky woman, so ancient hardly human,
With your woolly-white and turban'd head, and bare bony feet?
Why rising by the roadside here, do you the colours greet?

Me master years a hundred since from my parents sunder'd,
A little child, they caught me as the savage beast is caught,
Then hither me across the sea the cruel slaver brought.

No further does she say, but lingering all the day,
Her high-borne turban'd head she wags, and rolls her darkling eye,
And courtesies to the regiments, the guidons moving by.

3. The third stage is *the knowledge of the indwelling Lord.* There is a sense in which the knowledge of the ascended Lord seems to remove Him far from us and to make Him a distant and almost absent personality. But we follow on to a knowledge which brings Him nearer than before. We no longer know Christ 'after the flesh.' As St Paul says, 'The Lord is that Spirit.' Spirit can touch spirit, spirit can dwell with spirit, spirit can interpenetrate spirit, with the swiftness and instancy and power of thought and desire and passion. The writers of the Epistles, therefore, speak of Christ not only as risen, and ascended, but as formed within them, pulsing within their wills, becoming the energy of their lives, enshrined in their hearts, indwelling within the temple of their spirits.

When the longing for God and a sense of His love is a spring of desire in our hearts, when the beauty of holiness in Christ has risen upon us with the rapture of a new dawn, we know that Christ dwells within. While we worship, while we serve, while we suffer, or while we pray, we find that the Lord is within and we enter into the knowledge of the indwelling Christ. Myers has engrossed that experience in an impassioned verse when he makes St Paul cry—

Then thro' the mid complaint of my confession,
Then thro' the pang and passion of my prayer,
Leaps with a start the shock of his possession,
Thrills me and touches, and the Lord is there.

¶ After a brilliant course at Yale, Horace Bushnell turned aside from a career of the highest promise to preach the Gospel to a little congregation of believing men. He turned aside because he had entered into 'the secret of the Lord.' Some fifteen years later he followed on to know the Lord. He lost his only son, and in that hour of keenly felt trial his holden eyes were opened and he saw the risen Lord. In succeeding years he passed on, as all men do who are sure that Christ is risen, to the conception of the ascended Christ. But five years later, as he expresses it, he 'passed a boundary.' Christ had been pressing in upon him with a gentle and insistent sense of His nearness. He came down one February morning, after a night of quiet wakefulness, with a new light on his face. When one asked him, 'What have you seen?' this preacher of Christ for over twenty years replied, 'The Gospel!' He sat down to pour the treasures of his new experience into a meditation on the words, 'Until Christ be formed in you.' He proclaimed as a revelation from the Spirit of God his new knowledge of Christ as the indwelling, energiz-

ing, and sanctifying life of the soul. A new serenity of spirit and a wondrously sweet sanctity marked his after years.[1]

The secret of the Lord is not consummated even when we know His indwelling. We do not yet know as we are known. Yet no higher knowledge shall be given to us here. 'Now we know in part,' writes Paul, 'but then shall we know even as we are known.'

Man's Nature and Destiny

1 Cor. xiii. 12.—'Then shall I know even as also I am known.'

We are always asking questions which are hard to answer. But to mankind the greatest puzzle of all is man himself. What is man? How has he been made? Why has he been created? What is his life? Whence come his thoughts? What happens to him at death? What is the meaning of his desire for knowledge, his reverence for goodness? How can we explain the existence of that inward secret guide which we call conscience? For thousands of years men have asked these questions, and they still continue to puzzle us.

It is only within the last century that leaders of science, cleverly weaving together a vast number of facts, have told us that man has been derived from lower forms of animal life. They picture a slow progress upon the earth, lasting a hundred million years, during which mammals evolved from minute organisms. And they tell us that something like a million years ago man sprang from some ape-like stock. They have thus discovered the machinery which God used to bring man into existence. But to the question, 'What is man in himself?' they can give no answer. Obviously he is not an ape, just as an ape is not an amœba or any bit of protoplasm. Ask a man of science how we think, and he will confess that he does not know. Obviously our thoughts are connected with our brains, but that is about as far as we can get. The nature of life in its simplest manifestation is an unsolved mystery; and when we reflect upon man's spiritual faculties, his knowledge of good and evil, the working of conscience—all those powers and aspirations which lift us above the rest of creation—our perplexity deepens.

[1] W. M. Clow, *The Secret of the Lord*, 337.

¶ What a monstrous spectre is this man, the disease of the agglutinated dust, lifting alternate feet or lying drugged with slumber; killing, feeding, growing, bringing forth small copies of himself; and yet looked at nearlier, known as his fellows know him, how surprising are his attributes! Poor soul, here for so little, cast among so many hardships, filled with desires so incommensurate and so inconsistent, savagely surrounded, savagely descended, irremediably condemned to prey upon his fellow lives: who should have blamed him had he been of a piece with his destiny and a being merely barbarous? And we look and behold him instead filled with imperfect virtues: infinitely childish, often admirably valiant, often touchingly kind; sitting down, amidst his momentary life, to debate of right and wrong and the attributes of the Deity; rising up to do battle for an egg, or die for an idea; singling out his friends and his mate with cordial affection; bringing forth in pain, rearing, with long-suffering solicitude, his young. To touch the heart of his mystery, we find in him one thought, strange to the point of lunacy: the thought of duty; the thought of something owing to himself, to his neighbour, to his God.[1]

We must ask why man has been created, what is the meaning of his existence. It is impossible to suppose that there is no meaning in the process that has led to man. It is incredible that the civilization which has been created by man's distinctive spiritual qualities is the product of blind natural forces that have no spiritual purpose. We cannot explain the higher by the lower. Behind the machinery of the Universe lies Purpose. Through the machine God has worked. Man is God's creation. Man's spiritual understanding is God's gift whereby we can know God's nature and do His will. God, in short, has made us in His own image—for service to Him, for communion with Him. The ideals which arise within us with compelling power, the spiritual visions which are the great constructive forces of civilization, come from God. They reveal the fundamental ultimate purpose of earth's travail.

'Yes,' say many, 'goodness, beauty and truth are somehow of primary importance in the Universe. If there is a God they reveal His nature. And it is quite clear that we must

[1] R. L. Stevenson.

increasingly weave these things into human civilization—we must use knowledge to make human life better and more beautiful—if we are to fulfil what seems to be our destiny. There is a spiritual urge within us. It is that which makes us distinctly human. "On, on to the City of God" is a cry which will never lose its appeal so long as man remains man.' 'But,' many such people go on to say, 'what am I in this scheme of things? A link in a chain, here to-day and gone to-morrow. A handful of dust in whom the light of the spirit flames for an hour, till other animated dust seizes it for an equally brief span of time. I perish, while humanity marches on.'

Is this so? Is such a picture reasonable? Let us suppose that men in far-distant future ages will create on earth the perfected society which Mr Wells, with superb fancy, presents for our admiration. Will it last? Yes, we may perhaps agree, it will last for a time. But the sun's heat is declining. Twentieth-century astronomers tell us with a new confidence that stars die. In the end the earth will be unable to support life. And then the human race will vanish too.

If life in this tabernacle of flesh is the only life of man, then, sooner or later, the purpose of man's creation will be frustrated. If the human spirit is not eternal, the universe is unintelligible; all the manifold spiritual excellence of humanity is merely 'such stuff as dreams are made of,' unless in putting on Christ we put on immortality.

¶ Without immortality all our fathers are finally dead, and we shall be finally dead, and our children will be finally dead, until at last, upon a planet that was once uninhabitable and will be uninhabitable again, every human being will be dead—nothing left to conserve the spiritual gains of all this sacrifice upon the earth. I cannot believe that. I cannot believe that this ascending struggle of humankind is doomed to end in a hopeless cinder heap.[1]

Christ is risen; the perfect man rose from the dead. He who was supreme among humanity by the perfection of His spiritual might, and the unswerving steadiness of His moral loyalty, is alive for evermore. He who was *the* Son of God, because He never failed in loyalty to God, died to rise again. These facts explain man to himself as do no other facts in human history. They reveal that man was made that he might serve God, and win eternal life with God. Man differs from the beasts fundamentally because he can know God. He can search out the secrets of God's universe. He can distinguish between right and wrong. Within him is a witness to the moral law. God, as it were, works within him while apparently He has moulded all other animals from outside. God has made us for Himself, to understand His purpose and to do His will. And, in imposing new duties on man, God has offered him a new destiny—Eternal Life. The man in whom the spirit of Christ lives shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven where Christ reigns.

This faith offers the only intelligible explanation that we can get of man's existence. Modern science, so far from rendering it incredible, drives us to it. We must take facts as they are. Man differs from all other animals in having spiritual understanding. He has a soul, and unless the soul be immortal we cannot conceive why it exists.

¶ I believe in the immortality of the soul, not in the sense in which I accept the demonstrable truths of science, but as a supreme act of faith in the reasonableness of God's work.[1]

When we turn to Christ we get a picture of what God intends that man should become. Had the Lord's perfection no meaning in the eternal scheme of things? We repudiate the idea. History repudiates it too. The frightened disciples who fled on Good Friday were, within a brief space of time, boldly preaching that Christ was alive. They had seen Him. It is impossible to explain their new-born confidence and enthusiasm unless it be admitted that they were absolutely sure that Jesus was risen from the dead. The Kingdom of God, eternal in the heavens, is no dream, but an established fact. All Christ's teaching as to man's duty and destiny acquired added strength when seen in the light of His Resurrection. The disciples felt that the keystone had been fitted into the arch of their faith. Eternal Life was not a hope but a certainty. Christ had repeatedly affirmed that the grave was not the end of human existence. His own Resurrection confirmed the truth of His teaching.

We cannot exaggerate the importance of the Christian doctrine of immortality. Belief in

[1] H. E. Fosdick, *Adventurous Religion*, 198.

[1] John Fiske.

it transforms our whole outlook on life. It enables us to see the reason of the struggle between good and evil in which we are forced to take part. This life is a process of soul-making. Our spiritual conflicts are Divinely ordained that we may win a communion with God which shall outlast death. God has not made man for nothing. We are not earth-bound creatures, mere products of time whom time will destroy. We are potentially sons of God, created to enter a spiritual realm which is Eternal with God. In putting on Christ, we put on immortality.

The more we ponder upon the mystery of human existence, the stronger will become our faith in the Christian doctrine of immortality. We know so much and yet so little. Is it possible that in a few years we shall die and never know what lies at the back of it all? And then the utter absurdity of such an ending rises before us. No. God will not stultify His action. Surely a time will come when, in St Paul's words, 'I shall know even as now I am known by God.' God has made the scheme to which we belong. Because He must be reasonable, His scheme must be reasonable also. And we cannot make a reasonable picture of human activity unless we believe that, as men serve God in striving for righteousness and truth, they win Eternal Life.

The Eternity of Love

1 Cor. xiii. 13.—'And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.'

THESE are the last great words of the Apostle's Hymn to Love—a hymn which establishes his claim to be a great religious genius. 'The greatest, strongest, deepest thing Paul ever wrote.'[1]

Perhaps the most remarkable verse in this remarkable chapter is the concluding one, for in this verse St Paul has found an absolutely complete and satisfactory formula for the Christian character. Faith, hope, and love, with love in the place of honour—is not this Christianity in a nutshell? Within a few years after the Ascension, St Paul not only has penetrated to the very heart of Christ's teaching, but has given us the kernel of the whole gospel in one of those illuminating phrases. So at least the Church has always felt. What the cardinal virtues—Justice, Fortitude, Prudence, and Temperance—were to pagan antiquity, that Faith, Hope, and Love have been and are to the Christian.

[1] Harnack.

Illingworth draws this distinction. He says, 'Faith, Hope, and Charity are not special virtues like justice or fortitude, but spiritual dispositions which penetrate the entire personality, and qualify its every thought and act.' There are whole stretches of life where the old pagan cardinal virtues have no opportunity to come into play. They are special virtues for special occasions. But faith, hope, and charity are woven into a man's whole way of living and thinking. Every day calls for them.

1. In these three words—Faith, Hope, and Love—our treasure of religious truth is contained.

What, then, exactly, do we mean by *Faith*? What is the antithesis of faith? Is it Reason? Do we believe some things because we are convinced by evidence that they are true, and other things because the Church tells us to believe them, or because it is a meritorious act to force ourselves to believe them? Is faith an act of submission to authority? Is there any truth in the answer of the child who, according to the story, said, 'Faith means believing what you know to be untrue'? Look out some of the places where faith is mentioned in the New Testament, and see whether it is ever opposed to Reason. You will find that it never is: it is opposed to *sight*. Faith is not the acceptance of certain historical propositions on insufficient evidence. It is trust in God and goodness.

Think not the Faith by which the just shall live
  Is a dead creed, a map correct of heaven,
Far less a feeling fond and fugitive,
  A thoughtless gift, withdrawn as soon as given;
It is an affirmation and an act
That bids eternal truth be present fact.[1]

It is the resolution to stand or fall by the noblest and highest hypothesis that we can conceive. It is the spirit of Athanasius when he stood 'against the world'; of Luther when he said, 'God help me, I can do no otherwise.'

[1] Hartley Coleridge.

It is the confidence that somehow or other all things must work together for good to those who love God. In such a confidence there must always be an element of venture, of willingness to run a risk. We do not mean a calculation of chances—that is not faith, or anything like it—but a readiness to throw in our lot with the good cause because it is the good cause, in full expectation of victory, but willing even to accept final personal defeat rather than share in the triumph of evil over good. It is this willingness which makes faith a moral act. It is also this uncertainty, if we may call it so, which distinguishes faith from sight. The assurance of faith does not falter: it is not uncertain in that sense; but the manner in which good will conquer is so much hidden from us that our courage would fail if faith did not contain a large element of moral determination—a fixed resolve to live and die fighting for Jesus Christ, come what may. In this moral element lies the invincible power of faith.

¶ I think it is clear that all religious faith, if it is to be worth anything, must rest finally on choice and be able to maintain itself in face of hostile evidence. The point is beautifully illustrated in one of R. L. Stevenson's *Fables*, called 'Faith, Half-faith and No-faith-at-all,' in which three men, going on a pilgrimage, discuss the grounds of faith. One, a priest, bases his faith on miracles; another, a 'virtuous person,' on metaphysics; the third, 'an old rover with his axe,' says nothing at all. At last one came running and told them all was lost; that the powers of darkness had besieged the Heavenly Mansions, that Odin was to die and evil triumph.

'I have been grossly deceived,' cried the virtuous person.

'All is lost now,' said the priest.

'I wonder if it is too late to make it up with the devil?' said the virtuous person.

'Oh, I hope not,' said the priest, 'and, at any rate, we can but try. But what are you doing with your axe?' says he to the rover.

'I am off to die with Odin,' said the rover.[1]

Faith, it is clear, is very closely allied to *Hope*. Hopefulness is the temper of Faith. We know of no moralist before St Paul who made hope and joy moral virtues. It was an inspiration, and it shows how thoroughly he understood the teaching of Christ. 'Can the children of the bridechamber mourn when the bridegroom is with them?' And 'Lo, I am with you all the days, even to the end of the world.' Take those two texts together, and we have a justification for the prominence which St Paul gives to hope and joy in his teaching. Some of the most wonderful and soul-stirring words of revelation are those in which hope is spoken of. 'The God of hope,' 'We are saved by hope,' 'Christ in you, the hope of glory'—these are expressions which only familiarity could deprive of their commanding power. And do we not feel them to be true? The power of any life lies in its expectancy. What do you expect? The answer to this question is the measure of the degree in which a man is alive. Hope is as far removed from shallow optimism as from morose pessimism. It is not impatient. It knows that God takes thousands of years to accomplish His purposes; but it is content to know that there is that going forward in the world with which a man may link his labour without fear of spending it in vain; it is content if God will show His servants His and their work, and their children's children His glory.

¶ Bishop Wilberforce was once out walking with Thomas Carlyle, and the conversation turned to the recent death of a mutual friend. At last Carlyle turned abruptly to the Bishop and asked, 'Have you a creed?' 'Yes,' was his reply, 'and the older I get the firmer that creed becomes under my feet. There is only one thing that staggers me.' 'And what is that?' Carlyle asked. 'The slow progress that creed makes in the world,' said the Bishop. For some time Carlyle said nothing, and then, very slowly and seriously, he said: 'Ah, if you have a creed you can afford to wait.'

I have not seen, I may not see,
My hopes for man take form in fact,
But God will give the victory
In due time; in that faith I act.
And he who sees the future sure,
The baffling present may endure,
And bless, meanwhile, the unseen Hand that leads
The heart's desires beyond the halting step of deeds.[1]

And so we come to *Love*—the last link in the chain. 'Faith,' says St Paul, 'energises, works,

[1] R. A. P. Hill, *The Interregnum*, 10.

[1] Whittier.

by love.' 'Love,' says St Bernard, 'is both God and God's gift. And so it is Love that gives Love: when God gives us Love He gives us Himself.' It cannot be taught; it cannot be defined or described. It is above us; it is not ours yet. We are sent into the world to learn it; to grow up into it.

For life, with all it yields of joy and woe,
And hope and fear,
Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love;
How love might be, hath been indeed, and is.[1]

2. St Paul saw in the life to come faith, hope, and love as the abiding glories. Such gifts as prophecies and tongues and knowledge pass away, but these are eternal. We feel that love must be so, but how come faith and hope to have a place in 'the life everlasting'? The answer is found in a true view of the continuity of life. Life here and life hereafter will not be two entirely different things. Death is not the prodigious miracle that some suppose it to be. It is a perfectly simple, law-abiding event in life. We cannot but believe that death has a more than physical significance, and that it will put an end to some of the conditions in which at present our development has to be carried on. We shall not hereafter pay the bitter price of suffering for our soul's abiding gains. We shall not find the thing to be trusted through the failure of that which seems true. We cannot but believe that what one may call the dark and negative side of our soul's progress towards the perfect knowledge of God will be done away. But surely life will always mean growth. We are bound for no stagnant world but for a life of progress, filled with nobler purpose. To reach finality would be to fall short of eternity. If we believe that hereafter and for ever we shall have a personal existence, then we shall for ever be finite beings in the presence of the Infinite Being. For evermore He will be unfolding Himself to us and bringing us to an ever deeper and greater life in Him. Therefore the vital conditions of our relationship to God must abide, and they are faith and hope and love. We talk about faith being lost in sight and hope passing into realization; but we must never forget that so speaking we are describing not sudden and complete events but one eternal experience. Here faith has a battle to fight and hope makes the heart ache. They are the price of these things in a world where no good thing is obtained without cost, or kept without challenge. But even if no difficulties stood in the path of goodness, faith and hope would keep their real meaning and use. They will not cease to live when they no longer have to fight for their life. They are not mere adjuncts of human life. They are the eternal conditions of our relationship with God, and they must abide so long as God and the soul abide.

[1] Browning.

But of these three things that abide for ever the greatest is love. Wherein lies the surpassing greatness of love? Obviously it is not a matter of duration; for faith and hope, as the eternal conditions of the life of love and the knowledge of God, must live as long as love lives.

Does not the question of love's supreme greatness find its answer in this way? Faith and hope are means to an end. Love is the end itself. Faith and hope are the eternal ties uniting us in our ever-expanding life to the infinite life of God; but love is that life itself in us. Love is the very life of God shared with us. Faith and hope are ever being changed into vision and possession. But love knows no change: it is final and absolute.

¶ 'God is not faith,' says Bengel, in his epigrammatic way, 'and God is not hope, but God is love.'

'The greatest . . . is love.' That is just a statement of the Apostle's central theme. That is the plea of the poem. It might have been introduced at the beginning. But the writer left the title till the end. Here it stands, simple, indefeasible, final. Surely no words come nearer to us, pass farther beyond us, than these words. Love is the simplest response of life. Deeper than the theologies and the philosophies it has its being. We met it in those earliest days when all the approval or disapproval we could understand was the gladness or pain in the eyes of those that loved us. It is the simple fact whence home and friend and brother draw all their meaning.

And whilst these words are so near to us, whilst they express that which is at once woven into the simple fact of our existence and the simple meaning of our creed, they go beyond us, filling the illimitable future. And that is

the great test of all the classics of the heart. They take us to the high hills where the breath of God is all about us. So is it with this Hymn. Many have read it without knowing it is deathless literature, but surely few have read it without feeling that it is immortal truth.

Hope

1 Cor. xiii. 13.—'Now abideth . . . hope.'

Nobody can read his Bible to much purpose without seeing that hope is a chief part of godliness. Hope was the very life of Israel. 'Our fathers hoped in thee.' 'The Lord will be the hope of his people, the confidence of the ends of the earth.' And if the old fire of hope burned low in the ages of Pharisaic formalism, it blazed out again more brightly than ever when Christ our Lord brought life and immortality to light. Christ in us is the hope of glory, the one living power that could overcome the disgust and loathing of that hard old pagan world where hope was lost. And if its brightness was dimmed again in the dark times of Christian Pharisaism, it was never quite extinguished.

1. The gospel never looks on hope as an accident of health or temper, but as a primary duty. It is the Christian's proper attitude. What, then, is this attitude of hope? What does St Paul mean when he says that it was by hope that we were saved? With him it is at least more usual to say that we were saved by *faith*—faith from the side of man, or grace from the side of God. And, though it is not necessary to draw a hard-and-fast line between faith and hope, it is clear that he does distinguish them. In St Paul's language faith refers to the original act of accepting Christ, and 'belongs essentially to the past, and to the present as growing directly out of the past,' while, when he is looking to the future—in his own words, 'reaching forward to the things that are before'—he uses the word hope. Faith is the conviction out of which hope springs, without which hope would be but a baseless aspiration.

In his famous hymn St Paul links hope with faith and love as one of the triad of Christian virtues. At first sight it may seem a little strange that hope, which, as we ordinarily use the word, means a cheerful attitude towards the future, should rank with faith, which is the very core of religion, and with love, which is religion in action. It is true that in its climax St Paul exalts love above the other two members of the triad: but it remains true that he has put the three on the same level, and, if he so far corrects himself as to give love the pre-eminence, is it not because love is the crown of the others? Faith is the ground of hope, and both find in love their consummation. If faith and hope do not issue in love, we have but a selfish, unsocial religion, a religion unworthy of the name: wherefore love, as the completion of the three, is 'greater than' the others.

¶ In the twenty-ninth canto of the *Purgatorio*, 'the three Ladies dancing and singing at the right wheel of the Chariot,' says Dr Carroll in *Prisoners of Hope* (p. 425), 'are the three theological virtues in their ideal purity.' Dante means to suggest their relationship. 'Sometimes Faith led the dance, and sometimes Love: Faith, because to love God and hope in Him we must believe that He is; Love, because nothing quickens Faith and Hope like Charity. Hope never leads, because it is dependent for its very existence on its sister-virtues. And finally it is the song of Love which determines the movements of the dance, swift or slow, Love being the "royal law," the great commanding virtue, which gives the right order and measure to man's life.'[1]

It is clear that, with St Paul at least, each of these three words has a pretty definite, yet by no means a restricted, sense. Faith is of course far more than an intellectual attitude: it includes such ideas as we denote by the moral terms loyalty or devotion. Love, as the great hymn has set forth, is no mere emotion, but a principle dominating all conduct in matters small and great. Both are active forces utterly transforming the life lived in obedience to them. Must we not, then, if we are to do justice to this great thinker, give to hope also a scope correspondingly wide? To correspond with its associates hope must mean hope in action, hope inspiring life—something more positive, more dynamic than, for instance, the somewhat forlorn hope of Watts's familiar picture, striving to get music out of the last unbroken string of his lute. That conception indeed represents one aspect of hope, what we

[1] *The Expositor*, Oct. 1925, p. 305.

may call the negative aspect, hope which refuses to yield to despair: but it is far from the more virile conception of St Paul.

¶ It is put finely for us in Chesterton's 'Ballad of the White Horse.' They were as dark days as ever had been in English history. Tide after tide of invasion from Norse and Dane had come pouring in. Again and again Alfred had called his men and gone out and fought, and each time in vain. Now at last the news comes to him once more that the Danes are on their way for a fresh invasion of his land. He kneels in prayer and asks the Virgin Mother whether he ought to go out yet once more. Again and again, he tells her, he had gone out in hope, and each time he had come back defeated. And yet, as he prays to her, he says that if she will give him one word of assurance, he will go again. But he is only told that storms fiercer than he had ever breasted were coming. Under that promise even this did not quench Alfred's hope, and he rises up to do what he had never done under the old assurance of easy victory—

> Up over windy wastes and up
> Went Alfred over the shaws,
> Shaken of the joy of giants,
> The joy without a cause.

As his men saw him coming, they thought it was with the old vain word of an easy victory, and they were about to tell him they would follow him no more. But not now was Alfred's word that easy word. No, but—

> This is the word of Mary,
> The word of the world's desire;
> 'No more of comfort shall you get
> Save that the sky grows darker yet,
> And the sea rises higher.'

And in front of that rising sea his men rose up to go with him, and this time, from the darkest night they had ever known, came the bright morning of their lasting victory.[1]

2. Want of hope is no natural weakness, but a deep estrangement from Christ. The victory of faith which overcometh the world is the natural working of the triumphant hope and overflowing thankfulness without which Christian life is not itself. The vilest sin is not more unbelieving than the cultured cynicism which knows the world too well, forsooth, to cherish hope, and shuts its eyes to the powers not of this world working in it. Yet even the devil of cynicism bears witness that there is a false hope, as well as a false faith and a false love. Hope sustains the sinner that God has forgotten, that He will never see it. Hope puffs up the Pharisee, because he is not as other men, nor even as this publican. Hope sends many a man to gospels of reform, of commerce, of culture, of science, for the salvation which none of them can give. But false hope dreams a vain dream; true hope takes full account of truth. We ignore nothing, dissemble nothing, excuse nothing; yet we have the full assurance of hope. We know far better than the cynic how sin has enslaved ourselves, our neighbours, and the world; but we know that sin is conquered. The love of Christ which towers far above the loftiest heights of human goodness reaches also far below the lowest deeps of human sin. Paint your picture of the world as darkly as you please, and add that Christendom in something like two thousand years has failed to cure it. Our hope is neither ignorant of these things nor careless of them, but triumphant over them. Before the one stupendous fact that the Son of God was crucified for men all hopelessness vanishes, all doubts are silenced, all murmurs die away.

¶ On the bronze gates of St Sophia, at Constantinople, may still be seen—at least it might be seen some years ago—the words, placed there by its Christian builder, and left there by the scornful ignorance or indifference of the Ottomans—I.X.NIKA, 'Jesus Christ conquers.' It is the expression of that unshaken assurance which in the lowest depths of humiliation has never left the Christian races of the East, that sooner or later theirs is the winning cause.[1]

That ye may abound in hope, says St Paul, hope for ourselves, hope for our neighbour, hope for the world. There is nothing more needed by the present distracted and disillusioned age than this hope, which, on the one hand, waits 'with patient fortitude' for its realization, but which, on the other hand, is, to adapt Milton's immortal sentence, no 'fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed,' but girds up its loins for 'the race

[1] R. E. Speer, in *The Record of Christian Work*, xxxv. 746.

[1] Dean Church.

where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat.'

3. Hope plays a great part in the individual salvation of men and women, but in the passage from which our text is taken St Paul is taking a wider view. He is not asking how a man may save his own soul, but with what virtues he must be equipped for the service of his fellows and the promotion of the cause of God. Happily, in these days, no apology is needed for emphasizing the social side of religion; if anything, the danger is rather lest individual or personal religion should receive less than its due consideration. There may be, indeed there is, a wide difference of opinion as to the possibility or the wisdom of bringing Christian principles directly to bear on the economic relations between man and man or the political relations between state and state; yet few who are in any sense Christian doubt that the more Christian men become, the better will it be in the long run alike for the nation and for the world.

In urging the claim of hope, we but recall attention to a feature of the Christian ethic which does not always perhaps receive adequate recognition. No Christian doubts that faith is the essential foundation, or that love is the motive power of all religious endeavour; but it may be that hope, which St Paul seems to have made the link between the two, is apt, at times when discouragement is natural, to remain in abeyance. At such times we are likely to forget that 'patient fortitude' is one side of it, what we may call its passive side; perhaps also to forget that, on its active side, it is the inspiration of the eager and enterprising spirit.

To read the signs of the times, and from them to forecast the future, needs more courage than is given to most, and more knowledge than any one can claim. But at least one of the clamant needs of our time can be discerned by the most ordinary observer: that, if the civilized world is to advance further, it requires above all things Peace—peace between classes and peace between nations. On the one hand, we see abundant signs of a more fraternal spirit between master and man, and more than one influential organization working to that end; on the other hand, we hear the class-war preached as a gospel. One thing, however, is beyond dispute: that, in our own nation at least, never were there so many people seeking social peace and ensuing it with all their might. Why, then, is the peace which so many desire so slow to come? The answer perhaps is that we must add to our virtue knowledge, knowledge of historical and economic facts, knowledge also of men and the understanding which enables one man to look at things with the eyes of another. We cannot here separate the moral and the intellectual faculties: the clearer mind, in this regard at least, goes along with the more sympathetic heart.

Hate and mistrust are the children of blindness,—
Could we but see one another, 'twere well!
Knowledge is sympathy, charity, kindness,
Ignorance only is maker of hell.

Do we not all tend to take too short views? We do not usually think much beyond our own generation, whereas we need to think generations ahead. We have to learn to wait with 'patient fortitude,' but this waiting does not mean sitting with folded hands. There is the active side of Hope, the strenuous confronting of immediate difficulties, the submission to the drudgery of details, in the confidence founded on faith that our children or our grandchildren will have a clearer vision of things and of men, and so, working with better understanding, and not less goodwill, will bring the brotherhood of man nearer than we can ever hope to see it. So, in time, too, it will become as *natural* to believe in fellowship between nations as it has hitherto been to believe in mutual jealousy and fear as the normal attitude of States to one another.

St Paul's words about hope apply to all the great problems of to-day. We must work with confidence, since hope cannot be disjoined from faith, and wait with patience, since hope is 'for things which we see not'!

Dreams are they—but they are God's dreams!
Shall we decry them and scorn them?
That men shall love one another,
That white shall call black man brother,
That greed shall pass from the market-place,
That lust shall yield to love for the race,
That man shall meet with God face to face—
Dreams are they all,
But shall we despise them—
God's dreams!

Dreams are they—to become man's dreams!
Can we say nay as they claim us?
That men shall cease from their hating,
That war shall soon be abating,
That the glory of kings and lords shall pale,
That the pride of dominion and power shall fail,
That the love of humanity shall prevail—
Dreams are they all,
But shall we despise them—
God's dreams! [1]

The Pursuit of Love

1 Cor. xiv. 1.—'Follow after love.'

No one knew better than St Paul that the great majority of mankind can never be really happy, or accomplish anything good, without some ennobling pursuit of such a kind as to give dignity and worth to life. If the pursuit be difficult so much the better. Indeed, the highest powers are never called forth, the noblest virtues are never developed in man or woman, unless some object is set before the mind, the effort to reach which involves toil and struggle and self-denial.

The old tales and legends which from time immemorial have been the feeders of the world's romance are full of this idea. The favourite hero of old-world story was not only the great warrior whose arm was irresistible in the fight. Quite as often it is the roving adventurer, who, following some far-off quest, travels over sea and land, encountering perils and hardships by the way, resolved 'to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.'

The Christian ages, like the ages that preceded them, were fertile in the creation of poetic legends, in which saint took the place of warrior and mariner. And among these legends none acquired a wider currency, or made a deeper impression on the popular mind, than that which tells of the mystical quest of the Holy Grail—the sacred cup, brought to this island by Joseph of Arimathea, filled with the precious blood of Christ that streamed from Him on the Cross. English readers have been familiarized by the genius of Tennyson with the story of the pure knight, Sir Galahad, to whom, as the prize of a life's devotion, the vision was revealed. It came to him because he sought it with true heart and unflinching purpose.

[1] T. C. Clark.

A gentle sound, an awful light!
Three angels bear the holy Grail:
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And star-like mingles with the stars.

And these things, like the story of Christian the pilgrim and his journeying to the Heavenly City, are an allegory. The Divine life that is rooted and grounded in love is the true object of human pursuit, and all others are but as fleeting shadows. There is a sense in which the highest good does not come to us unsought, like air and sunshine. We have to follow after it, to pursue it with something of the ardour of the hunter, something of the patience of the seeker after truth 'who follows knowledge like a sinking star, beyond the utmost bound of human thought.' The Kingdom of Heaven has its quest—a quest not the less ennobling and inspiring because its object is no mystical vision, but a practical, attainable good.

1. Such a quest was propounded by our Lord Himself when He said to His disciples, 'Follow me.' 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.' And He gave to that quest an assured certainty when He added the promise, 'He that seeketh findeth.' No wonder that the Christian life, as interpreted by its greatest saints, has always been something of a pursuit and a pilgrimage. Just as, in the dawn of history, a Divine voice called Abraham to leave his country and his father's house and to go forth into a land which God would show him, so the awakened soul hears the call which reminds it that 'here we have no continuing city.' Abraham found his Canaan, though he never possessed it. It was a true voice that spoke in the depths of his soul, bidding him break loose from the ties of home and country, and detach himself from old familiar ways. And, in like manner, God's call to a man is always at first a call to loneliness. Amid the hum and chatter of common life, with its petty cares and trivialities, a soul called of God cannot stay. It must arise and go forth and travel on, ever seeking, yet never fully satisfied. The day never comes to a true follower of the Lord Jesus when he says, 'My Canaan is here: I

will follow the Divine Love no further. My pilgrimage is over. I have reached the goal.'

2. Certainly St Paul was very far from thinking that he had attained. And if we want to understand what the Apostle meant by the quest of love, and how he construed its obligations, we must first realize what manner of man he was, and how he followed his own great Ideal.

St Paul was much more than a great religious teacher. From indisputable evidence we know him to have been one of those large-hearted, great-souled men who not only needs must love the highest when they see it, but who, in loving and pursuing it, are incapable of a narrow or grudging thought. He was an enthusiast, if you like. But never was there a saner enthusiast. Never was there one who was less warped from his high purpose by personal aims, or less tricked by the disguises in which self-love arrays itself. Never was there so practical a visionary, or one so careful to distinguish the semblance of things from the reality. How high-pitched was his ideal of life! Nothing, surely, more stirring or more pathetic is to be found in the old fables of romance than the missionary experiences of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. Love called him, and he arose and went forth, leaving home and country and the traditions of his fathers. It was not for fame or glory, it was for the sake of his brother men, that he bound himself to a perpetual pilgrimage. They were commonplace men and women among whom he went to and fro. Yet it was just in caring for these undistinguished people, in making the best of them, in lavishing on them gifts of love and sympathy, that this great religious genius found the object and purpose of his energetic life.

When, therefore, St Paul said, 'Follow after love,' he was preaching what he himself practised. 'Conduct,' said Matthew Arnold, 'is five-sixths of human life.' And St Paul knew well that the only way to influence conduct is to set before men the highest ideal of all, and to show them how to follow it.

¶ People think we missionaries go out to those parts of the world, and from morning to night do nothing but preach sermons. It is quite a mistake. It is not the preaching of a sermon so much as the living the life that tells on the native heart. It is by living a divine life, by striving to follow in the footsteps of Him who came to express the Father's love, that we win the heart of the savage, and raise him up to become a true man or woman in Jesus Christ.[1]

As a matter of fact, we know that men have never been able to live righteously without ideals of some kind. Even in the old Pagan world, with all its hardness and its grossness, the rudiments of Christian love were faintly shown in the form of loyalty and devotion to the good of the commonwealth. Courage, patriotism, honour, manly independence, self-sacrifice for the right, even a tender regard for the ties of kindred and of friendship, were among the moral ideals of ancient Greece and Rome.

Yet, when we pass from these primitive ideals to the teachings of our Lord and St Paul, we are conscious of being taken up into a higher world of thought and feeling. The old heathen virtues are not displaced; only they come recommended to us by a Diviner sanction. The knowledge of what God is, and what is His relation to man, as revealed in Christ Jesus, brings with it a profound corresponding change in the idea of what man is, and of what God would have him to be, and how he should comport himself towards his brother man. And of this change St Paul, in the New Testament, is the foremost witness and prophet. If we ask how it was that the deeper secrets of the Christian life were revealed to him, the answer is that he learned them by inward contemplation of his Divine Master, and by loyally following the blessed steps of His most holy life.

3. St Paul's ideal of Love has become the permanent possession of mankind. Looking back upon broad spaces of time, we can measure the silent revolutions it has brought about in human society. We can mark its steady advance as a dominant factor of civilization, in spite of the caricatures men have devised of it, and the fierce opposition of the innate selfishness of the human heart. We can show how philosophies, and sciences, and creeds, and dogmas have passed away; how new ideas and interpretations of life have come and vanished; and yet love, in St Paul's sense of the word, has never failed to supply the best minds of every age with their most powerful incentive.

And if so, does not this appeal to our better

[1] *James Chalmers*, 274.

self with prevailing power? Short of following this grand ideal of Christian character, can we satisfy our consciences? Surely, as often as we trespass against the law of love; as often as we are selfish in deed and word, impatient, egotistic, censorious; as often as, with narrow hearts and contracted sympathies, we shut the door of brotherly feeling against our kind, we do not err blindly, we sin against light and knowledge. Men are beginning to confess this openly. At least, as regards others, they are coming to judge of greatness and goodness by this standard, and by no other. 'We are all Socialists now,' said a party statesman. What he meant was that Individualism as a watch-word is played out, and large professions of a desire to do good to others, and to remedy social inequalities, must henceforth be part of the stock-in-trade of every politician who wishes to make his mark.

Years are coming, years are going, creeds may change and pass away,
But the power of love is growing stronger, surer, day by day,
Be ye as the light of morning, like the beauteous dawn unfold,
With your radiant lives adorning all the world in hues of gold.
Selfish claims will soon no longer raise their harsh, discordant sounds,
For the law of love will conquer, bursting hatred's narrow bounds;
Human love will spread a glory filling men with gladsome mirth,
Songs of joy proclaim the story of a fair, transfigured earth.

This is no visionary aim, suited for saints and apostles, but not calculated for the rough, work-a-day world. Religion is given us to transform human life, and to purify Society by inspiring it with noble aims and lofty aspirations. We wrong Christianity if we banish its ideals of conduct to some other world than this. The place of Christianity is amid the stress and worry and fever of commonplace existence. Where toil and struggle are; where man wrestles with man in the fierce competition of modern life; where all the harsh irritations of life jar upon the sensitive nerves, and the strife of tongues is loudest—there Divine love should come with her healing hand, bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things.

This is possible for us; and this is the task to which Christ Himself calls us; and this way lies our truest happiness.

Many Voices

1 Cor. xiv. 10.—'There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.'

Put in the briefest phrase, the argument of St Paul in this section of the letter is for intelligibility of speech. He tells the Corinthians pointedly that there is no value or edification in what is incomprehensible. He says the world is full of voices each of which has its distinctive quality and meaning; and that they must seek to bring the same definiteness and significance into their own utterances.

The truth to which the Apostle here gives expression has a wider application than he gives to it in this immediate connection. There are many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without significance. Let us enquire what some of these voices are.

1. There are the manifold voices of *Nature*. Stars, flowers, earth, sky, sea—all these speak, and that with no unimpressive voice, to the soul of man. Has the sea no voice? It had for Byron. Has the marsh no voice? It had for Sidney Lanier. Has a landscape no language? Emerson said of a certain view among the White Mountains, 'That always makes me pray.'

But Nature speaks in vain except to the apprehending soul. It needs the sympathetic ear to catch the voice and its meaning. Nature has nothing to say to some men, whereas to David it was full of spiritual admonition. To Jesus Christ every common thing of common life had some Divine significance. His was a soul so sensitive that every sound broke upon it—sound of river and sea, sound of sorrow and sin—and instantly found interpretation as to its true meaning in the mind of God. It is inner faculty alone that hears God's voice in Nature and interprets its significance. Where that faculty exists the slightest hint will suffice.

¶ The marvellously sympathetic genius of Beethoven could transmute the most common-

place sounds into Divine and imperishable creations. He walked in the woods and heard the notes of birds and the music of the waters, and transcribed them into the 'Pastoral Symphony.' Lying awake one night and hearing a person, shut out of a neighbouring house, give four knocks for admission, those four knocks haunted him, and became the characteristic theme in the first movement of his Violin Concerto in D. To an ordinary man those four taps of the knocker would have been just that and nothing more, but to the 'shaping spirit' of the great composer's imagination they were a voice full of significance and solemnity, the voice of 'Fate knocking at the door' of the human heart, and became material out of which was evolved one of the finest creations in music.

The Spring blew trumpets of colour;
Her green sang in my brain—
I heard a blind man groping
'Tap-tap' with his cane;

I pitied him in his blindness;
But can I boast, 'I see'?
Perhaps there walks a spirit
Close by, who pities me,—

A spirit who hears me tapping
The five-sensed cane of mind
Amid such unguessed glories—
That I am worse than blind.

2. There are the voices of *Art* and *Literature*. Art speaks a universal language, and perhaps was never so full of appeal to the common heart of the world as to-day. In literature the utterances are more manifold than ever, with more or less of signification. True, there is much debased art; and there is much corrupt authorship, literature which tends to deprave the mind instead of elevating it, and to belittle life instead of ennobling it. True, the 'signification' of some of the voices that we hear is not salutary nor edifying, but much the reverse. Yet, in the messages of how many can the ring of genuine truth be detected, the music of a lofty poetry be heard, the glory of a Divine revelation be perceived! Many a canvas is instinct with spiritual sentiment; many a marble statue is vocal, like the statue of Memnon, with meanings not of earth. Then, again, there is the voice of music itself, from which the Apostle draws his illustration. How much it has already said to the world! How much more it has still to say!

3. There are the voices of the world *Religions*. The great religions of the ancient world, each of which 'gave birth to a civilization,' in Egypt, Phœnicia, Assyria, Persia, Greece, India, China, are venerable not only with the hoar of antiquity, but for the great body of sacred wisdom and salutary ethic embodied in their Scriptures. Each of these religions was a blessing to the people among whom it originated, and marked a stage of progress in their history. Each had its distinctive message, its revelation, more or less imperfect, but not without signification, not without its contribution to the common faith of the human heart.

In the speech of St Paul to the Greeks in Athens we see a Christian version of the endeavour to find a common element in all man's attempted worship. God, whom all men everywhere are ignorantly and blindly seeking, shut His eyes to the mistakes of ignorance, for He had made all nations to dwell in all the face of the earth that they should seek Him, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him.

That man can have no enlightened idea of religion, and no healthy spiritual sympathies, who is not sensible of the beauty, the elevation, the spirituality of many of the conceptions embodied in the religions of the East. 'Any one who will visit the best shrines where Buddhism and Shintoism are now practised will certainly be filled with wonder at the nobility of the precepts, and the air of reverence and beauty, that have gathered round the holy places. If the temple be one of Shinto worship, the eye is directed upon the mirror of the oratory. When you ask the guardian he will tell you that God Himself cannot be seen, but dwells in the Holy of Holies: yet the Spirit of God is in the mirror, and in contemplating our own lives we may find Him. "When you worship, God is here." "If we seek Him we become one with Him."'

'Take even the temples of Kwannon, that ancient Chinese god or goddess whose enormous wooden statues, in some cases carved in one piece from the stem of an ancient tree, represent the taking over into Buddhism of various Chinese idolatries. Round the main statue you will find others standing in the dim

light, and beside one of these, in a shrine which is at least five hundred years old, there is this inscription: "Jizo, a coming Buddha, yielded up His right to the eternal peace that He might save the souls of men, and renounced Nirvana to suffer with humanity for other myriad million ages." Now this statue is not, as one might think, a relic of some ancient missionary enterprise of Christianity. It is an integral part of certain developments of Buddhist teaching, and no one can fail to see how near it comes to the essential idea of self-sacrifice which Christians express in the atonement.' [1]

These systems are admittedly defective in those elements which render the Christian faith a unique inspiration. Only through the 'Word made flesh' can we know the perfect mind of God. It is also true that in the course of the centuries they have declined from their own high level and become overlaid with the accretions of a licentious superstition; but none the less had each of them a voice to its age, and none the less have they a message for us if we will but learn to read it aright.

4. Even in the multiplied *sects* into which the Christian Church is divided may we not hear some of those manifold 'voices,' none of which, according to the Apostle, is entirely without signification?

From some points of view the divisions of Christendom present a sad, and from others, a grotesque, spectacle. But, after all, there would not be all this diversity of opinion and of operation if there were not a certain amount of religious earnestness, and if there were not in each of them a certain basis of truth. They stood for some principle which it is worth while to contend for, and which, perhaps, but for their special contention, would be in danger of being lost sight of. Each has its own witness to the world, and so long as it is not uncharitable, and does not dogmatize and seek to supplant or suppress the witness of others, it is doing a useful work. Truth is so precious that any phase of it should be regarded with reverence and assimilated with gratitude. No Church has all the truth. God's great Oratorio of Revelation is not a solo but a symphony, a 'voice of many waters,' a mighty universal harmony, of which the new song before the Throne is the culmination and the climax.

[1] J. Kelman, *The Foundations of Faith*, 180.

Prayer

1 Cor. xiv. 15.—'I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.'

Prayer is the inner side of all religion. Religion is essentially an energy of the soul, awakened by the sense or the experience of the presence of God, and prayer is that elevation of the mind to God by which we become conscious of His nearness. Prayer is thus the supreme act of the human mind. It is the characteristic activity of that simple part of the human soul which underlies the will, the reason, and the affections. We cannot pray with our surface self; we cannot pray with some poor fragment of our personality. Prayer needs the whole man. What Robert Browning says of religion is especially true of prayer: 'Religion, all or nothing.' An eminent man, not himself a believer, is reported to have said, 'It does not take much of a man to make a Christian, but it takes all there is of him'; and the remark shows true insight. Religion, and prayer, which is the heart of religion, take all there is of us.

1. Prayer needs effort. If labour is prayer, according to the proverb, prayer is also labour. Coleridge, in a classic passage, describes the act of praying as 'the very highest energy of which the human mind is capable.' In prayer, as in other kinds of work, the power of attention and concentration is much more important than spasmodic demands or long rests. To multiply devotions is not to advance in devotion. Vain repetitions are worse than vain, for, like all passive impressions, which do not pass into will and deed, they deaden the receptive faculty and they become fainter on each repetition.

¶ Prayer requires, like research, concentration of mind. It is an intellectual exertion from which many men shrink, partly because they are averse from such exertion, partly because they are unconvinced that the efficacy of prayer is part of the world of reality. Such concentration is physically impossible for a prolonged period.

Attempts at prolonged prayer fade away into nothingness. They make demands which man's physical nature cannot meet. In this as in more secular matters, it is the quality of con-

centration and consequent reality at which a man should aim, rather than at long and comprehensive appeals.[1]

We shall hardly gain this concentration if we rush into prayer the moment we kneel down; we shall carry with us too much of our outside world if we do this. We ought to spend a few moments in remembering, in homely phrase, to whom we are speaking. Some people pray to Almighty God as if He were a benevolent fairy who grants us our wishes if they are properly backed by the name of Jesus Christ, used as a charm.

¶ The point of view expressed in *Eben Holden* represents the prevalent Christian outlook. This is how Jed Feary expresses the idea of prayer as a cheap and easy convenience:

. . . don't expect too much o' God, it wouldn't be quite fair
If fer everything you wanted ye could only swap a prayer;
I'd pray for yours an' you fer mine, an' Deacon Henry Hospur,
He wouldn't hev a thing to do but lay abed an' prosper.
If all things come so easy, Bill, they'd hev but little worth,
An' someone with a gift o' prayer 'ud mebbe own the earth.
It's the toil ye give t' git a thing—the sweat an' blood an' trouble
We reckon by—an' every tear 'll make its value double.[2]

Another common mistake is unconsciously to form a mental picture of God as a very long way off, in the geographical heaven of our childhood. If we remember what, of course, is the truth—that heaven is nearer to our souls than this earth is to our bodies—we should direct our thoughts inward rather than outward to find God. St Paul's words about the temple of the Holy Ghost would then become more real to us.

¶ This church or temple of God within thee is the consecrated place of Divine worship where thou canst worship God in spirit and in truth. Accustom thyself to the holy service of this inward temple. In the midst of it is the fountain of living water of which thou mayest drink and live for ever. There the mysteries of thy redemption are celebrated, or rather, opened in light and power. When once thou art well grounded in this inward worship every day will be a Sunday to thee, and wherever thou goest thou wilt have a priest, a church, and an altar along with thee.[1]

There is not much danger, practically, that prayer may become for us an idle indulgence. Yet St Paul says that love is the energy or the spontaneous activity of faith. He means that the sense of God's presence within us finds its natural utterance, not by the side of, but in and with and through, all that we think, all that we purpose, and especially all that rules our affections. In proportion as we have found God within us we shall see Him outside us. The beautiful saying attributed by Tertullian to Christ Himself, 'When thou seest thy brother thou seest thy Lord,' is the highest expression of this truth.

To the religious mind all the outside world has a sacramental value. It means more than meets the eye. When the New Testament opposes both the flesh and the letter to the spirit, it means that the real world is the hidden spiritual reality of which words and actions and events are the imperfect outward expression. The things which are seen are temporal, and by comparison unreal; the things that are not seen are eternal and real. So even our friends may be known to us no more after the flesh, as St Paul says. We may come to think of them as immortal spirits rather than as actors on this little stage. In other words, we may see the Christ in them.

Those last words may remind us that St Paul says that even Christ is to be known no more after the flesh. All life is sacramental, but the doctrines of the Church are pre-eminently so. We have no language in which to express God adequately. The Greek Fathers who drew up our Creeds knew that well. They habitually described the death and the resurrection of Christ as mysteries. Mystery is the Greek word for sacrament. The truth of the Creeds for them consisted in what may be called their prayer value.

That is a line of thought that has lately been developed a good deal, both by Roman Catholics and Protestants—the notion that the truth of the Creeds of the Church consists for us in the use we make of them in our devotions. They

[1] 'M. A.' in the *Times*.
[2] *Methodist Times*, June 17, 1926.

[1] William Law.

are true for faith as the vehicles of truths which can only be understood by us in symbol. Now this line of thought, which is welcomed by many as affording a refuge for faith from the attacks of criticism, is partly true and partly dangerous. It separates faith from knowledge far too much. We are told that the same event may be untrue to science and true to faith. That way of arguing is in danger of taking away from us the historic Christ. It separates between the historical Jesus and the Object of the Church's worship.

2. In the second place, an irrational faith is not really faith at all, and we shall not find the prayer value very great of doctrines which are held in defiance of our reason. It is not the office of faith to take sides with the feeling and the will against the reason. Faith rises above these conflicts between the faculties, and only assures us that there is a harmony not fully understood behind the discord, and that the truth, if we could know the truth, would be found to satisfy the just claims of our moral and intellectual and emotional natures altogether, though now we cannot always reconcile the apparent contradictions between them. It is useless to talk of the prayer value of creeds which insult the understanding. 'I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also.' We may surely hope to distinguish those doctrines which, from the nature of the case, must be symbolic from those in which the voice of science has a right to be heard. But, nevertheless, we may learn a valuable lesson from this, namely, that we must not separate a religious doctrine from its religious meaning, from its prayer value. These old formulæ have come down to us enriched by the devotion of ages. Their home is not amid the clatter of controversy but in the oratory of the soul, where they first began to live before language and logic were overtaxed to express them. In the stillness of that shrine many controversies are hushed.

Christianity is already united in the chamber where good men pray; indeed, it has never been divided in that region. East and west, north and south, can use the same devotional books and the same devotional hymns. The builders of Babel speak many tongues, but the wise master builders of God's temple have only one. Strictly, it is not their own language, but the language in which God speaks to them. They translate it very imperfectly into their native language, whatever it may be. We, too, may hear that voice, if we will listen to God speaking to our hearts, and we may speak it, too, in our stumbling fashion, if not for others to understand, yet for our Heavenly Father to hear, for this hearing and this speaking is what we mean by prayer.

Emotion and Reason in Worship

1 Cor. xiv. 15.—'I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.'

This statement, as St Paul made it, referred to the special manifestations which at that time marked the outpouring of the Spirit. The Apostle was pointing out the contrast between such a gift of the Spirit as speaking in an unknown tongue, and other gifts which were exercised in words that could be understood. This direct application of his words we shall put aside; it makes little appeal to us now. In a slightly different sense we can give the passage a wider interpretation. It may serve to suggest to us the existence of a parallelism between praying and singing: both spoken prayer and sung praise contain not merely an emotional but also an intellectual element.

1. The parallel between the words of prayer and the music of song might be illustrated by a reference to the criticisms which are sometimes made on the poetry and the tunes of some of our modern hymns. It has been said by an authority on Church music that in any of the collections of hymns ordinarily in use some sixty per cent. would probably be condemned on their literary side by the man of letters and a similar proportion on their musical side by the man of music. That may possibly be an exaggeration. Hymnology covers a wide field, and there is room for much difference of taste. But most cultivated people are fastidious about hymns, and the older we get the more our fastidiousness grows. The words of many hymns are undoubtedly open to criticism either for weakness of sentiment or for lack of emotional restraint, and non-musicians will readily believe that to the musical ear many hymn

tunes are also open to criticism for somewhat similar defects. Tunes, like words, may be wanting in delicacy and dignity. The words may be too fervid and sentimental: the music may be too boisterous and unrestrained. There may be too much of the spirit and too little of the understanding in both.

¶ We shall not in future say:

Worth while a thousand years of woe
To speak one little word,
If by that 'I believe' we own
The Godhead of the Lord.

There is an exaggeration about it at which the understanding revolts. We shall not sing:

Crown Him, ye morning stars of light,
Who fixed this floating ball,

because our understanding knows that this floating ball, our planet, is not fixed, and can hardly be described as floating. Nor shall we sing:

Oh Paradise! Oh Paradise!
I greatly long to see
The special place my dearest Lord
In love prepares for me,

or

Yes, Thou wilt answer for me, righteous Lord,
Thine all the merits, mine the great reward;
Thine the sharp thorns, and mine the golden crown,

because our understanding feels that such words are unworthy and tend to self-glorification instead of self-abasement. There is a selfishness alien to the spirit of self-sacrifice and the mind of Christ about such thoughts.[1]

2. We may give a still wider scope to our application of St Paul's words. We may extend them so as to cover the whole of our vocal and instrumental Church music and the whole of our Church prayers and praises. A remarkable analogy holds good between music and worship generally. Good Church music, like other good music, involves the due balance and adjustment of two opposite qualities. On the one hand there must be sweetness, melody, harmony, play of emotion; on the other, strength, seriousness, self-control, and a certain amount of austerity. One might say that in all good Church music there is both an emotional and an intellectual element. Neither of these two types of quality ought to oust the other. When George Herbert, for instance, calls Church music 'sweetest of sweets,' we feel that he is a little one-sided in his appreciation. He ignores too much the seriousness and strength which ought to balance the sweetness. Church music at its best sings with the spirit, but it sings with the understanding also. Why do so many people feel that Brahms' German Requiem speaks to them as hardly any other Church music speaks? The answer surely is, because its intensity and depth of feeling are perfectly balanced by its seriousness and dignity of thought. Alter the adjustment of these two elements and you spoil the work.

3. Exactly the same adjustment and balancing of the spirit and the understanding are necessary in any act of worship if it is to reach a high level. Our worship may give too much play to emotion and sentiment, or it may be governed too much by reason and reflection, and in either case it is imperfect and one-sided. Many people do not get nearly as much good as they might out of the Church services which they attend, because their religion is too dreamy and emotional. It wants the fibre and backbone which rational conviction alone can give. They do not put any reasoned effort into their expression of prayer and praise: they are purely passive and receptive during the service: they are content to have everything done for them and to do nothing for themselves. Worship of this kind has little practical effect on the daily life. Our thoughts must be fixed on the reality of the Divine Presence, our minds must be full of our personal need of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is only by an effort of reason and will that we can bring our prayers and praises into direct contact with the practical duties of our daily life.

There are other people whose defect when they attend public worship is of an opposite kind. They have not feeling enough. The emotional element in them is overborne by the intellectual. Their prayers are hard, cold, dry. Their attitude is too purely critical. They find it difficult to join in praise and thanksgiving

[1] H. D. Rawnsley.

with any fervour of spirit. They cannot let themselves go. They cannot rise to any height of religious rapture. They appreciate the Church music perhaps, but mainly from a musician's point of view; they do not find it any great spiritual help. A purely rational worship, where reflection keeps all spiritual feeling at arm's length, entails much spiritual loss. There can be no real prayer or praise if there is no depth of feeling in the heart. Contrition, love, and thankfulness are all feelings, and no amount of rational conviction about them can make up for the absence of the feelings themselves.

¶ Raffaelle in his great picture at Bologna brings out with much delicacy of imagination the devotional character of St Cecilia's music. It is not the mere portrait of a saintly musician that the painter has had in view: it is rather the personification of religious worship under the influence of musical inspiration. The saints ranged round her in the picture are comparatively uninteresting; the strength of the work lies in Cecilia's own face and attitude. She is not actually playing, though she holds in her hand something that suggests a small organ. Her more secular instruments of music she has dropped, and they lie broken at her feet. She will need them no more, for as she looks upward, wrapt in an ecstasy of adoration, she listens to the perfect harmonies of the heavenly choir above. Her earthly music has lifted her soul to the very gate of heaven. Exactly the same thought appears in the passage so often quoted from *Il Penseroso*, where Milton lets us see the effect produced on his young sensitive soul by music heard in a cathedral—

> Dissolve me into ecstasies,
> And bring all Heaven before mine eyes;

or in the little poem on 'Church Musick' by George Herbert, where the poet seems to feel the ecstasy of a disembodied spirit lifted above the earth; for this is what he says to the music as he listens:—

> Now I in you without a bodie move,
> Rising and falling with your wings;
> . . . . . .
> But if I travell in your companie,
> You know the way to heaven's doore.[1]

[1] H. G. Woods, *At the Temple Church*, 66.

In our services may we look up to heaven and catch faint echoes of the harmonies of the spiritual world. Among the joys that God has prepared for them that love Him may not something analogous to music be one? St Paul speaks of things which the ear heard not on earth, a music, it may be, etherealized beyond all that we can now conceive, the reflex of the harmonies of all the spheres of existence, the spontaneous expression of the active and contemplative powers of the spiritualized life. Even on earth we sometimes feel that a serenely beautiful religious life exhibits a closer analogy to good music than to anything else. Not seldom in such a life we get the impression that sweetness of feeling is happily mated with seriousness of thought, and we are reminded of the combination of spirit with understanding in the praying and singing of which St Paul speaks.

> So to live is heaven,
> To make undying music to the world.

The Place of the Mind in Religion

1 Cor. xiv. 20.—'Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.'

THE gospel makes its appeal to the whole man. Jesus said: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.' But mark Jesus *did* say, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy *mind*,' that is to say, according to His thought, the mind has its place in the religious life. And the Apostles of our Lord are as explicit upon the matter as is our Lord Himself. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews complains that those who ought to have risen to the position of teachers were still babes, able to receive only the very simplest teaching. And here, in our text, the Apostle says, 'In malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.'

All that seems plain enough, and yet there are many who profess and call themselves Christians to whom this matter of the relation of the intellect to Christianity is by no means plain. On the one hand, there are those who regard the intellect as the natural foe of faith—

by them its claims are denied; and, on the other hand, there are those who look upon the intellect as a servant for whom in the sphere of religion no service can be found—by them its duties are ignored.

Here, then, are two misconceptions. Let us look at them in turn.

1. There is, first, the mistake of those who are tempted to think of the mind as the natural foe of faith. If this is so, and in the degree in which it is so, the Christian Church itself must be held largely responsible. Not only through the first centuries of its history, but through the whole period of its existence, Christian men have been too slow to recognize the virtues of the intellect. The duty of thinking, the sacredness of fact, the fearless love of truth, the obligation to rid oneself of passion and prejudice have never received at the hands of Christian men that full and encouraging recognition which is their due.

And there have been those who have been tempted to look upon mind, as Dr Dale once put it, as a sort of alien power, which must be fettered if it is to be prevented from tearing up the foundations of the Church of God. This it was that carried John Henry Newman to the Roman Catholic Church. To him it seemed that reason always and everywhere led to unbelief. What, he asked himself, is there that can withstand and baffle its corroding influence upon religion? And he found it, or thought he found it, in the arms of a Church which claimed to be invested with the prerogative of infallibility in all matters of religious faith. But we have no need to go to the Romanist for that, for there are many Protestants who have not learnt to rid themselves of the suspicion and dread of intellectual inquiry when it touches upon matters of faith. An inquiring intellect, if it begins to trench upon religion, is to them an imp of darkness which must be kept under lock and key or it will work all manner of mischief in the religious life. There was a time when the smallest allusion to our modern, critical inquiry concerning the Scriptures was received with alarm amounting almost to panic. Let us not forget that the questions which scholarship raises scholarship must decide; and when wise men go wrong, wiser men must put them right. The facts are God's facts, not ours.

¶ Truly a thinking man is the worst enemy the prince of darkness can have; every time such an one announces himself I doubt not there runs a shudder through the nether empire, and new emissaries are trained with new tactics to, if possible, entrap and hoodwink and handcuff him.[1]

But whatever may have been the failures of the Churches, this can be claimed, that they belong rather to the manifestation of Christianity in history than to its original spirit and character, as these are revealed to us in the New Testament. The very last charge which any fair-minded interpreter of St Paul's letters could bring against him would be that of exalting credulity to virtue or putting human intellect into chains. For, next to the gospels, these remarkable documents are remarkable for nothing so much as for the reverent freedom and daring in which the Apostle allows his mind to play about the high and solemn themes on which he writes. With Paul, the thinker always kept pace with the missioner, the one entering into new fields of thought as the other passed into new fields of service.

¶ Auguste Sabatier declared that one of the things that most attracted him to Protestantism, and for which he had been most thankful in his association therewith, was that as a Protestant he was able to consecrate to Jesus Christ and His service the full activities of his intellectual powers.[2]

It has been said that human nature craves to be both religious and rational; and this, at least, one may say with all certainty regarding St Paul, that a religion that would not bear thinking about he would not have known what to do with. The proof of this lies in his writings. It is a strange thing, in the light of facts like these, that Protestants, at least, should ever have dreamed they could do God service by trying to put fetters upon the mind when it is busying itself upon things of religion. When the Apostle preached to the Bereans did they say to one another, 'Paul says it and it must be so, and there's an end of the matter?' No; we read that they searched the Scriptures to see whether these things were so. 'Many of them, therefore, believed.' They 'searched' and—therefore—they 'believed.' We sometimes hear it said that nine-tenths of a young fellow's difficulties about religion begin as soon as he

[1] Carlyle. [2] C. Silvester Horne.

begins to think for himself. There is a grain of truth in that, but there is a bushel of truth in this—that if most of us would but think more we should find most of our difficulties vanish. It is as true now as when Lord Bacon used the words—'A little philosophy inclineth man's mind to Atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion.'

¶ 'I am quite sure,' Dr Arnold wrote to an old pupil, 'that it is a most solemn duty to cultivate our understandings to the uttermost, for I have seen the evil moral consequences of fanaticism to a greater degree than I ever expected to see them realized; and I am satisfied that a neglected intellect is far oftener the cause of mischief to a man than a perverted or overvalued one.'

2. Now let us turn to the misconception of those who suppose that in religion there is nothing for the intellect to do. If we are Christians we know that our affections must go out to Christ; we know that our wills must bow to Christ, but the duty of our intellect we are by no means clear about. We mourn when our rebellious wills mutter against Him; when the fires of our spiritual fervour die down into dull, grey ashes; but how many of us have asked God to forgive us because we have had so imperfect an apprehension of the truth which He has made known to us? How many have prayed the prayer, 'Give me understanding and I shall keep thy precepts?' How often do we think of what Christ Himself said, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with . . . all thy mind?'

Here we have no better teacher than the Apostle Paul, and when we go to his letters we see that it is not only true that Paul himself was a thinker, but that he evidently expected his converts to be thinkers also. For the most part they belonged to the poor and uncultured classes, and yet it was to these, no less than to their more highly educated fellow-Christians, that he wrote the Epistles to the Romans and to the Ephesians, with their elaborate arguments and profound mysticism. Some one has spoken of the unreflective manner in which the early disciples accepted Christianity. If this means that it did not appeal to the intellect we may let the statement pass, but if it means that while men's hearts were stirred their minds were dormant, the statement does the scantiest justice to Paul's converts. What would unreflective minds have made of the Epistle to the Ephesians, which Samuel Taylor Coleridge said was the profoundest book in existence? Paul was great as a Christian because that gospel which makes its appeal to the whole man found in him so complete a response.

¶ Sir Thomas Browne wrote as a physician, but his exaltation of reason and learning is not less befitting other Christians, and his quaint yet penetrating words do not wholly lose their relevance when the subject of our inquiry is not nature but revelation: 'The World was made to be inhabited by Beasts, but studied and contemplated by Man: 'tis the Debt of our Reason we owe unto God, and the homage we pay for not being Beasts; without this, the World is still as though it had not been, or as it was before the sixth day, when as yet there was not a Creature that could conceive or say there was a World. The wisdom of God receives small honour from those vulgar Heads that rudely stare about, and with a gross rusticity admire His works; those highly magnify Him, whose judicious inquiry into His Acts, and deliberate research into His Creatures, return the duty of a devout and learned admiration. Therefore—

Search while thou wilt, and let thy reason go,
To ransome truth, even to th' Abyss below;
Rally the scattered Causes; and that line
Which Nature twists, be able to untwine:
It is thy Maker's will, for unto none,
But unto reason can he e'er be known.

. . . . . .

Teach my indeavours so thy works to read,
That learning them in thee, I may proceed.
Give thou my reason that instructive flight,
Whose weary wings may on thy hands still light.
Teach me to soar aloft, yet ever so,
When near the Sun, to stoop again below.
Thus shall my humble Feathers safely hover,
And, though near Earth, more than the Heavens discover.
And then at last, when homeward I shall drive,
Rich with the Spoils of nature to my hive,
There will I sit like that industrious Flie,
Buzzing thy praises, which shall never die,
Till death abrupts them, and succeeding Glory
Bid me go on in a more lasting story.[1]

[1] *Religio Medici*, part i., sect. 13.

We must give to God the service of our minds. As long as we withhold that from Him we withhold half His claim. Deep and earnest religious emotion is good, but unless it is rooted in intelligent conviction it is always in peril. There is no true growth which is not growth in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore we should sing, and pray as we sing:

> Take my intellect, and use
> Every power as Thou shalt choose.

'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and mind, and strength.' Let us take every faculty which God has given us and weave it, like another strand, into the rope which binds us to Himself, until

> All our powers, with all their might
> In Thy sole glory shall unite.

A Conversion in Corinth

1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.—'But if all prophesy, and there come in one unbelieving or unlearned, he is reproved by all, he is judged by all; the secrets of his heart are made manifest; and so he will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed' (R.V.).

From this letter it is possible to reconstruct the life of the early Church; it is the first manual of Churchmanship, from which it is the easier, because of its very informal and incidental character, to tell what a Church was like in days when the contemporaries of Jesus still lived and preached.

The section which deals with prophecy closes with the picture of a soul prostrate before God. This is the end to which the ministry of the Church must be directed. The Christian Church has this for its function, so to present Christ that souls within the House of Prayer shall 'wake and remember and understand.' This is the fitting close to worship.

It may be worth our while, therefore, to study the conditions which led to this discovery of God by a human soul in Corinth A.D. 58 or thereabouts. It sends a thrill through the eternal world; for this all the long travail of God was endured, for this the Saviour entered the darkness, for this the Spirit was sent. But what were the human conditions? It is not enough to dwell upon the eternal purposes of God—we must see to the thoroughfare. Do we make it reasonably probable that men should declare 'God is among you, indeed,' and fall on their faces? We are not in a position to pronounce upon the possibility or impossibility of this benediction to our services till we have fulfilled the conditions. The expression given to the conviction is of little importance. A soul may be prostrate before God and yet show no outward signs. Temperament and race make grave differences. What really matters is the humbling of the soul before a living and convincing reality. If that were known in Corinth it can be known to-day.

1. The session described here was no special mission service but the normal worship of the society of Christ. It was a most homely assembly. Dr Lindsay quotes from one of the oldest liturgies an instruction to the deacon at the 'period of the service, when the Lord's Supper is about to be celebrated, to command the mothers to take their babies on their knees.' It was still the day of the Church in the house. It was the age of life—often undisciplined and extravagant—but life in all its vigour and joy. The assembly may have lacked in decorum, but it gained in freshness; and the service was of the simplest. It began with the benediction. This was followed by the invocation of Jesus, and the confession that He is Lord. Then a brother prayed, and after him another. A hymn was sung; for the members had composed or selected hymns at home. The Old Testament was read, and some reminiscences of Jesus were given, followed by sober words of edification. Then came the moment of greatest expectancy. It was the time for the prophets—men who believed themselves and were believed by their brethren to be specially taught by the Holy Spirit—to take part. Sometimes two or more rose at once and spoke together; and sometimes when one was speaking the message came to another, and he leapt to his feet, increasing the emotion and taking from the edification. Sometimes during the meeting, at some part of the services, but oftenest when the prophets were speaking, there was a stir at the back of the room, and a heathen who had been listening in careless curiosity or in barely concealed scorn suddenly felt the sinful secrets of his own heart revealed to him, and pushing forward fell down at the feet of the speaker and

made his confession, while the assembly raised the doxology: 'Blessed be God, the Father of the Lord Jesus, for evermore, Amen.' [1]

2. There had been a definite appeal to the mind of the worshippers. Better to speak five words with the understanding than ten thousand in a tongue! The gospel from the beginning made its appeal to the intelligence as well as to the emotions. To win the emotions is often a quick way to results, but if the mind is not won also the Church is like an army which moves rapidly forward leaving a hostile fortress in its rear.

¶ It is a not uncommon mistake to fancy that evangelistic preaching should not tax men's intellects but warm their emotions. One has heard evangelists who strung a series of anecdotes on the slenderest thread of thought. Anecdotes which illustrate the subject are by no means to be disparaged, but one pleads for a subject worth illustrating. Or there is the evangelistic sermon which is a continuous appeal, 'a gush of feeling in a rush of words.' Benjamin Whichcoate voiced the experience of thoughtful hearers when he said: 'I have always found such preaching of others hath most commanded my heart which hath most illuminated my head.' [2]

The prophet had some new insight given to him; he had appropriated something strange and wonderful out of the riches of Christ; with surprise in his soul he came to see freshly the fitness of redemption to human need, its satisfaction, its searching power. He spoke as one who had seen and heard. It was preaching, but not all preaching is prophecy. It was preaching from within. In the beautiful Scottish phrase, the prophet was 'far ben.' Rabbi Duncan would pray sometimes at great length, and would explain at the end that when one gets in, it is hard to get out again. The prophet had got in; but he was still among men, speaking their tongue, thinking along their lines, and though many who heard him had not been yet so far within, they knew the truth when they heard it, and by faith they also entered in.

3. The prophesying was not left to one. Its effect was cumulative. One after another prophesied; and in their voices an undertone of sympathy and fellowship could be heard from those who were silent. It becomes possible for men in an assembly through united thought and feeling to reach a height to which not one of its individual members can reach. The total effect in Corinth of such a session was more than the sum of all the knowledge and faith and prayer of all the individual worshippers. All were at work. The Church was prophesying! 'He is reproved by all, he is judged by all.'

The prophesying Church convicts of sin. 'The secrets of his heart are revealed.' The man sees where he stands. The Church which has got into the Divine secret has also got into the heart of man. In Corinth during that session there was in the heart of the unbeliever a traitor ready to open unto God. There is always a traitor in the hold. The Church which prophesies knows this. George Fox found in the most unlikely places 'great convincements.' He appealed boldly to the traitor within. And as he made bare the secrets of the heart, so the Church, if all the Lord's people were prophets, would have this much-desired power.

4. Some questions seem to force themselves upon the Church of to-day. Does the casual worshipper strolling into the back pews find prophesying? Does he find a Church prophesying? There will be one preacher; but he is comparatively powerless if he is alone. What one man by himself is to God is one thing; what he is as the voice of a believing and prophesying Church is quite another. One voice alone might be heard; but beneath it and through it would be heard the harmony of a people speaking from within another land. How far is the preaching of the Church a reality to-day? There need not be words at all; the Friends teach Churches to-day the significance of silence. There need be no outward marks of excitement. But upon any casual hearer an impression of a certain kind would be made. 'Somehow,' he would say, 'these men and women and children, differing in age and outlook, are saying the same things. They are all speaking, though only one voice is heard. They have one secret. They say that Jesus the Saviour is here. They put their faith in many ways. Some falter at certain notes. Some make discords at times; but all the discords

[1] T. M. Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries*, 46.
[2] H. S. Coffin, *What to Preach*, 164.

are overwhelmed in the tumult of the common faith. It is a strange and arresting thing.'

The Church has made the man wonder. He is exposed now to the energy of the redeeming love. He is not left alone, but is compelled to come in. If he leaves the building, he is still pursued. He will be convicted of sin as the secrets of his own life are set over against the secret joy and hope and love of this community. He will confess Christ, and be prostrate at the feet of God, converted not by a preacher but by the preaching Church.

This is the end to an Apostolic service of worship. Is there any other end to be compared to it?

The Church's Witness

1 Cor. xiv. 25.—'He will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed' (R.V.).

THERE never was more Christianity in the world than there is to-day. The things of Christ—often, it is true, detached from His name—have a greater place and hold than ever in the past. The spirit and principles of Christ are more widely operative in society and in the affairs of the world than at any previous period. Never had our Lord so much of His own way in the world as now, and those who can read the signs of the times see that He is winning new triumphs every day.

¶ 'My experience in broadcasting,' Sir John Reith, Managing Director of the British Broadcasting Corporation, told the Bristol students, 'has, at any rate, satisfied me that this country is fundamentally religious at heart, and that if real religion, stripped of the attendant embarrassments with which it is commonly associated, be presented to the people on these lines, it is accepted and welcomed. To-day we know that there is no more highly appreciated part of the broadcasting programme than that which deals with religion in this way.'[1]

Yet we have to put by the side of this fact the present condition of the Church. She is to a large extent forsaken by the people. Strange that at a time when Christ is winning in our own and heathen lands His Church should be losing! The very anomaly of such a thing is in itself arresting and suggestive. It is a state of things which can only be temporary, if we believe, as we do, that the Church is the appointed organ of our Lord for winning the world to Himself.

What, then, does such a condition of things mean? Is the Church exhausted? Has the world caught up with the Church? In point of goodness, purity, honour, reverence, and fine enthusiasms has she been overtaken and in some cases surpassed by her pupil? Has she ceased to be first except in name and by virtue of ancient authority?

1. How does the Church stand in the matter of *experience*? Has she a secret that is all her own and the thought of which begets a hunger and a longing in the hearts of men? Does she carry with her a vivid consciousness of God quite in advance of the experience of right-living people outside? It is to be feared that a large section of our Church members can claim no consciousness of God which differentiates them from their non-churchgoing neighbours. In this respect, the difference between being inside and outside the Church is not what it once was. In the early days the Church, in her united membership, had a distinct witness to bear and a story to tell. God was to her what He was not to the world. Men felt this, and listened with awe and expectation to the message. It has been so in all the great times of the Church. At the Reformation, and in the Methodist Revival, and in similar movements, the Christian community was clearly in advance of society, and had a previous secret experience of God as a God of forgiveness, peace, and comfort.

But how is it now? True, the modern Church is the custodian of the old gospel, which does not alter with changing times. But the vital message of the Church to any particular age is not the gospel in its wholeness, but only so much of it as has been verified in experience. The things tested and proved in the life constitute a message which cannot be resisted. Unless we have this experience of God and Divine things, we have no vital story to tell. We may repeat, with a seeming loyalty to the old gospel, the phrases which meant so much in other days, but listeners will be quick to discover whether we are telling our own story or merely repeating what we have

[1] *The British Weekly*, March 31, 1927.

heard or read. If the Church is to regain her ascendancy over men, the first condition is that she must know, deeply and intimately, the secret of the Lord. Her witness will then be arresting and magnetic, and men will say, 'God is in the midst of you.'

¶ Pleading for the note of certainty in the Methodist pulpit, Collier said: 'Men are tired of negative criticism—of teaching that neither strengthens faith, confirms hope, creates enthusiasm, nor comforts the soul. They are often amused at the satisfaction with which we quote any scientist or psychologist who deigns to patronize Jesus Christ, or has written a testimony to the probable efficacy of prayer, as if we were not certain of our own convictions. If our experience has not produced conviction for ourselves and the note of certainty in our witness, no amount of outside testimony of this sort will give power to our message. We are witnesses of these things. Our appeal will be effective in the measure that we are evidently sure of what we preach and what we testify.'[1]

2. What are we to say of the *works* of the Church of to-day? What demonstration of her Divine authority is she giving? True, she is exerting a mighty influence on society. Many of the popular movements of the time which have accomplished so much, and hold within them the possibilities of still greater things, largely owe their origin and no small part of their inspiration to her ministries. And not in social work only. We must not forget what she has done, and is still doing, for individuals. Through the Sunday schools and other agencies she is contributing to the parenthood and citizenship of our land. Life is sweeter and richer because of the subtle influence she is sending into society. All this we rejoicingly admit. But it is at least conceivable that a purely ethical society might accomplish this work. More is expected from the Church. She is, like her Lord, supernatural, and we expect signs and wonders from her. She claims a unique position because of her commission and the promised presence of her living Lord. Is she making good that claim? Do people go from her services saying with reverential gratitude: 'We have seen strange things to-day?' Are observing men saying, 'Surely God is in the Church, for she is doing for the outcast what neither education, law, nor moral influence can accomplish?' Speaking generally, it is to be feared that the modern Church is not working these miracles—miracles which were once amongst her commonplace activities. Certainly they do not belong to her normal life and activity. Were they at all commensurate with her size, organization, and resources, the problems that perplex and harass would be at an end. To justify her high claims the Church must be ahead of all other institutions, and do for men what they cannot do, and so prove that God is in the midst of her.

[1] G. Jackson, *Collier of Manchester*, 171.

3. Is the *life* of the Church such as to constitute a call to those outside? Can it honestly be said that it differs greatly from the life of ordinary respectable people who have no Church connection, or only a slight one? It is no unusual thing to hear very distressing remarks at times. Workmen will declare their determination to have nothing to do with a church in which their employers are playing a part, because of happenings in the factory. On the other hand, masters who are in full sympathy with Christianity will say that, if they want a man to do his work well and be as faithful behind their backs as before their faces, they do not choose a prominent Church member. Such remarks are often made when they are not deserved; but when they are uttered, not in anger but with deep sorrow, there must be some reason behind. If non-Christian masters and workmen are as true, honourable, and kind as Christians, or more so, why should we be surprised that the people do not flock to the services and fellowship of the Church?

4. How do *members* of our Churches stand in other respects? What of their devotion to good causes not strictly within the sphere of the organized Church, but all the same truly Christian? Are they whole-hearted in the application of Christian principles to all the affairs of our country? To ask these questions is to suggest that there is much to be desired in these directions. In enthusiasm in great causes, and loyalty to principle to the point of sacrifice, Church members are sometimes out-paced by men of the world. At best we are short of that Christian extra which arrests the thoughtful and makes them think of unseen forces.

¶ When Constantinople was being besieged by the Turks in the fifteenth century and the Christian garrison was hard pressed, they sent for the priests and monks, that they might go up and down the lines encouraging the troops and imparting spiritual reassurance. But the churchmen sent back word that it would interfere with the regular performance of their offices in church and cloister, it would interrupt their periods of formal worship and devotion, therefore they begged to be excused. And on the same ground many of Christ's followers have excused themselves from practical participation in conflicts which would have advanced the rule of God in the lives of men.[1]

The attitude and spirit of the Churches towards one another leave much to be desired, though a great advancement has been made in recent years. Much of the narrowness and bitterness of an earlier time is now a thing of the past. But there is still enough of jealousy, rivalry, arrogance, and needless competition to perplex the thoughtful outsider. Many Churches have yet to learn the elementary truth that love is the greatest thing—that it will attract when everything else fails.

It is hardly possible to think of the people standing aloof from a truly Christian Church. Imagine such a Church in the centre of one of our large populations! She carries a power that is not of earth, a power that uplifts and transforms the worst and most degraded. The life of her members embodies the high ethical principles of the sermon on the Mount, and the pity, patience, and forgiveness that were in the heart of Christ. Such a Church would beget a hunger for God and Divine things; her spiritual miracles would arrest men and make them feel that God was in her. The burdened, the poor, the lonely and the distressed would flock to her as a place of refuge and a home of sympathy and comfort.

The Lord Christ still has His ancient power of attraction, and if He is manifested in the experience, the works, and the character of His followers, men will begin again to worship and to say, 'God is among you indeed.'

[1] L. H. Bugbee, *Christ To-day*, 13.

Women's Ministry

1 Cor. xiv. 34.—'Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak.'

1. The share borne by women in the early propagation of the faith and the upbuilding of the Church is in striking contrast to the general conditions of women in that age.

It seemed as if at first Christianity was to break down the barriers of sex altogether. 'Christianity,' says Donaldson, 'overleapt the barriers of nationality; and it desired to fuse all mankind into one family and one faith.' Necessarily such a movement was accompanied by much excitement and agitation; but, when enthusiasm sways any association of men and they live in a state of ferment, they break in pieces the bonds of custom. Accordingly, at the very first stage, women take a prominent part in the spread of Christianity and all the activities of Christians.

'The women' were members of the company who 'continued steadfastly in prayer' during the ten days after our Lord's ascension, and when that prayer was answered by the coming of the Holy Spirit, they were still among the company gathered in one place. They shared in the gift of tongues, and St Peter refuted the mockers, who accused the company of disciples of being a party of drunken revellers, by citing the prophet who couples 'sons and daughters, servants and hand-maidens,' in the promise of the Spirit and His prophetic inspiration. When the Gospel enters Europe, Lydia, the prosperous merchant-woman, is the first of several who were 'succourers' of the Apostle, and one such, Phœbe, 'deaconess of the church that is at Cenchreæ,' was apparently the bearer of the most weighty of all his epistles addressed to the Church of Rome.[1]

Still more remarkable is the position of Priscilla, St Paul's 'fellow-worker in Christ Jesus,' to whom all the 'churches of the Gentiles' are in debt. Almost always, when she is mentioned with her husband Aquila, her name stands before his as the more important of the two, and we find her, with her husband, the means of the instruction of Apollos in the Christian faith. At Colossæ Apphia is the recipient of St Paul's letter along with Philemon and Archippus. Of the two personal letters of

[1] H. W. W. Stanton, in *The Record*, Sept. 29, 1921.

St John preserved in the New Testament, one is to a woman.

2. This surprising state of things did not endure. Neither the Jewish nor the Gentile world was ready for it. Their inherited prejudices were fortified, too, by a very natural fear of scandal attaching to the infant community. That this fear was not groundless we see from the Apostles' writings. For this great and rapid elevation of womanhood, on the principle that 'in Christ Jesus there can be no male or female,' did not take place without incidental disorders, which received no charitable interpretation from those hostile to the Christian faith. Those which are noticed in the Epistles of St Paul are dealt with by him according to circumstances of time and place, yet on general principles. They occurred principally among the excitable and licentious population of Corinth. There the gift of prophecy, exercised by women at and after Pentecost (as in the case of Philip's daughters), was in danger of becoming discredited by some who, when praying or prophesying, cast off the veil worn as a matter of decorum by women in public. The Apostle does not forbid the practice of prophecy, but he repudiates the gesture that mistaken zeal attached to it, and he connects this seemliness of women's veiling with the national custom of her wearing long hair as contrasted with the short hair worn by men, adding that 'nature itself' teaches that long hair is a dishonour to a man, though an honour to a woman. This illustrates the limitation inherent in all rules of customary observance—namely, that circumstances may arise sooner or later in which the custom becomes meaningless, or even harmful. Had St Paul been in contact with the long-haired Teuton warrior, or the Sikh of the present day, he would certainly have modified his statement, for by the word 'nature' he clearly does not mean the essential and permanent constitution of things, but 'the native sense of propriety.'

¶ An instance of the needless friction and hindrance to the faith that come from a mechanical interpretation of apostolic rules of conduct occurred in the Amritsar Mission of the C.M.S. some fifty years ago. Up to that time the Western custom as to baring the head in worship had been followed by the congregation, but an ex-Hindu convert, and leading member of the Church, feeling that this clashed with Indian ideas of reverence, kept on his turban in church. A lively and not very pleasant controversy ensued. The missionary in charge quoted St Paul: 'Every man praying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.' The Indian brother retorted—with much reason—that St Paul was not writing for Indians. Eventually for himself he carried his point, but the force of Western custom prevented any large following.[1]

3. In the words of our text St Paul deals more trenchantly with women's action in the kindred matter of speaking with tongues. His pastoral aim is to encourage prophecy as helpful to the Church and the outsider alike, and to limit the speaking of tongues as far as possible, without actually discrediting it. The reason for this was its tendency to uncontrolled emotional behaviour, the special danger of which, in the case of women, was clear. So of prophecy he still says, 'Ye can all prophesy one by one'; but of women a few verses later, 'It is not permitted unto them to speak,' the reference of the passage being to the gift of tongues. Not merely were they to abstain from 'speaking in a tongue,' but from attempts at interpretation of mystic utterances; and if they wished to satisfy curiosity not appeased in the assembly, they were to 'ask their own husbands at home.' The ruling principle is: 'Let all things be done decently and in order.' 'He had no desire,' writes Miss Alice Gardner, 'to curtail female or any other liberty, except for the preservation of law and order.' The spirit of Christian decorum must always prevail, though it may vary in outward form from country to country and from age to age. The form or custom must adapt itself to the spirit, not the spirit to the form; nor can one truth really contradict another. In the great liberation which Christian women had experienced at that time they were in danger of forgetting that such liberty could only be stable and progressive if it observed the social limitations imposed as a result of history, and this is the principle which the Apostle here embodies in a form generally suited to the age.

4. 'It is clear that the New Testament writers do not attempt to regulate procedure for all people and for all time. They lay down prin-

[1] H. W. W. Stanton.

ciples which must be determined by the teaching of Him of whom Jesus said, "He shall abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth;" "He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you." The process of enlightenment could not be instantaneous. If that had been possible our Lord could have achieved it Himself. There were many things then, there are many things now, which we are still unable to bear.'

'Among these was surely, at the beginning, that great affirmation made by St Paul—that in Christ Jesus there could be neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, bond nor free. It was difficult enough for the early Church to receive his first statement—that in Christ there was neither Jew nor Greek. It cost them a struggle to understand the full sweep of His teaching. But St Paul was concerned to make Christianity a universal religion, and unless he could persuade the Church of the first generation to accept the principle that in Christ there could be no question of race, he was defeated.'[1] It was his glorious task to insist upon that point, and his victory there made Christianity the faith, not of a nation or a sect, but of the world.

It has taken a long time in the case of the other two great relationships—those of class and sex—to cast down the barriers, but the Holy Spirit is continually leading us into a clearer apprehension of the truth. It took centuries for the Christian Church to realize that slavery was incompatible with the teachings of Christ, and longer still for her to realize that God has sometimes given a woman a great message for her age and the world. The Friends have always claimed for women liberty of prophesying, and the heart of the movement known as the 'Salvation Army' is to be found in its inspired womanhood. And if in our age God has given women who can both evangelize the world and teach the Church, it is not for the Church to reject this gift of the ascended Christ, but to use it with thankfulness and wisdom inspired by His Spirit.

¶ 'At this time there can be little doubt that a special need, and I should say the greatest of all our needs, is to find the right opportunity of using—more fully than the Church has of late at least been using—the devotion and the gifts of women. We need more service from men, no doubt, we need to recruit the ministry of priests and deacons, we need it most urgently, but it would seem to me that the need which most of all presses upon us now, because it arises out of the characteristic development of the whole life of our time, is the need to find the right way in all its fullness of utilizing the services of women in the Church.'[1]

[1] A. Maude Royden, *The Church and Woman*, 184.

The Gospel of the Resurrection

1 Cor. xv. 1, 2.—'Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand: by which also ye are saved.'

CLEAR, bold words: part of an argument and an appeal that have rung in the ears of Christians since the day they were first heard in the Church; an introduction to those grand and solemn verses known to so many with a weightier force of pathos year by year, for we hear them again and again at the burial of those we honour and those we love.

1. Perhaps if we were to seek for a summing up in one place of the teaching of that greatest of Christian missionaries, St Paul, we could not find it better than in this splendid chapter of his First Epistle to Corinth. The Gospel of Christ's resurrection is what St Paul preached. It is the Gospel in which the Corinthians, if they are to be steadfast, must stand. It is the belief which, in that wonderful expression which Christianity brought to life and meaning, is their 'Salvation.' That was St Paul's gospel. Hear it again, when he spoke to the Jews in the synagogue at Antioch: 'And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers, how that God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that he raised up Jesus.' The same gospel to Jews, to Christian converts, and yet again to those who have never heard of Christ at all; for it is exactly the same thought—Jesus and the Resurrection—which is the critical point in the sermon to the Greeks at Athens. There is no Christianity, no religion in any true sense, no God whom man can know, unless there is a resurrection from the dead.

That is really the heart of Christianity. That is what makes it differ from every other religion that has ever been preached to men. They teach—those wonderful religions of the past—

[1] The Bishop of Manchester.

that God has appeared on the earth, that man must give up sin if he is to find happiness; many doctrines indeed that remind us of what we well know in the Christian faith; but the one point where they all fail is in the certainty of the resurrection. Some think of men coming into the world again in different forms, some think of a gradual fading away of every passion till man is merged in the Infinite; but none ever came with the plain, simple, certain message of the Apostles of Jesus Christ.

Modern science cannot give us that certainty, but its wisest teachers will tell us that 'personality, persistent individual existence,' *must* be 'continued' unless 'actual existence suddenly ceases'—a thing incredible; and they will assure us that 'the character and experience gained by us' on earth 'become our possession henceforth for ever.' We welcome the saying of Sir Oliver Lodge; we do not ask or expect that Science should say more.

It is quite true that now some, who sincerely call themselves Christians, doubt, explain away, even deny, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as a fact. So did some, it seems clear, in St Paul's own day. It is with them he is arguing in this chapter: what is the consequence to us, he says, if Christ be not raised? But he bases his belief on the *fact* that Jesus Christ 'hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures.' Now, let us say quite plainly, that that fact is the only explanation of the existence and power of Christ's Church.

Let us never forget that Christianity is not a speculative system, it is not a philosophical theory. It is what Bishop Chavasse called a *factual* religion, and the central fact of all is the Resurrection. As one great writer puts it: 'If it be proved that no living Christ ever issued from the tomb of Joseph, then that tomb becomes the grave not of a man but of religion, with all the hopes built on it and all the splendid enthusiasm it has inspired.'

How did the disciples' faith survive the shameful death and the burial of Him whom they looked to as Messiah? How did those who believed in Jesus ever recover from His crucifixion? How did the Church spring up, vigorous, determined, missionary, within a few days of the end of all the Apostles' hopes? How did those who had forsaken Him show a boldness and a certainty that they had never shown before? No deception could cause this, no hallucination could cause it, no vision could cause it. What is the full meaning of immortality, what is the full meaning of the Resurrection, we cannot know; but this we ought to know—that the greatest fact in the history of all time, the life and work of the Christian Church, could not have come into being but for this. We cannot base a great truth on a falsehood. St Paul seized the essential certainty when he made it the central part of his teaching. He associates himself with the preachers from whom our Gospels came; the teaching is the same, the certainty the same. 'Therefore, whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.' If ever there were plain words written, if ever words plainly asserted not a vision or a metaphor or a delusion, but a *fact*, they are these: 'Now, if Christ be preached that he is risen from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.' No delusion, no pious imagination or exaggeration could give the security on which faith builds. 'Now *is* Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.'

That was the belief of St Paul, the belief of the Apostles; that is the belief of Christ's Church. Some have doubted and denied, and do still doubt. If any of us are troubled by the doubts and denials, let us remember at least that there is nothing whatever new in them, nothing which writers now say with so much vehemence that others have not said as vehemently centuries ago. And the answer is an appeal to the fact than which very few facts in the whole history of the world are better authenticated.

¶ To me, the central point is the Resurrection of Christ, which I believe. Firstly, because it is testified by men who had every opportunity of seeing and knowing, and whose veracity was tested by the most tremendous trials, both of energy and endurance, during long lives. Secondly, because of the marvellous effect it had upon the world. As a moral phenomenon, the spread and mastery of Christianity is without a parallel. I can no more believe that colossal moral effects lasting for 2000 years can be without a cause than I can believe that the various motions of the magnet are with-

out a cause, though I cannot wholly explain them.[1]

¶ There are very often times (especially such as this, on Saturday evenings, or any time when I'm idle) when I am forced back to a mere argumentative faith, founded on my apologetic notebook, the main argument which will bear any strain being the testimony of the Apostles to the Resurrection.[2]

2. Like all the facts of our Lord's life this is not a belief which can be accepted and then left among unheeded things. The Resurrection has, must have, for those who are Christians, a *living* force. It is not what ignorant people mean to condemn when they talk of 'dead dogma.' A dogma is an 'established principle'; and there can be no such thing as a principle which does not live and work. And the dogma of the Resurrection is that upon which everything in Christ's religion depends. St Paul says: 'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.' That is the message we want to-day. God has given us the victory, in Christ, over death: 'Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' He says: You *are* risen because you are Christ's: the power is there already; therefore seek those things that are above. 'To know that Jesus Christ lived and died and rose again from the dead is not Christianity, any more than reading the Bible and going to church is religion. But to know that in that wondrous life we each had a part, that in the Incarnation our fallen nature was taken into God, that with Christ we were crucified, with Him were buried, with Him rose, *that* is to know the power of Christ's life.'

¶ Newman once wrote Mozley a gravely friendly letter, warning him that he was disappointing those who liked him and believed in him, that after years of trusting him to rally and shake off his weaknesses, his old habit of wasting his time seemed every whit as strong as ever, that the two men who knew him best saw no improvement. And yet, he cried, what are we here for except to conquer our besetting sins? And might not Christ say that of us? Our life runs on, and we talk much about our faith, but still follow our natural instincts, do as others do, no better if no worse. He lavishes His grace on us, with what result judged by the hard facts of our daily living? Are we really nailing down to Christ's cross our own evil ways and nature? Are we dying with Christ, that we may rise with Him into a newer, better, far more splendid life?[1]

We can come to Easter only through Good Friday. Nearer to each one of us in time is death than resurrection. It is so easy to sing Easter hymns, it is so easy to put away sad thoughts, to think that our religion bids us be happy. Easy; yes, but fatal unless we have put away those things which bring death, those sins of pride, and anger, and selfishness, those unkindnesses that make home miserable; ay, and those sins of which it is a shame even to speak. God sees, God knows, God is not deceived. There is the certain resurrection, thank God; but 'whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap'—not something else, not peace and happiness from the sins that maim and disfigure life, the sins that come from the world, the flesh, and the devil. When we think of Easter, do not let us forget Good Friday. Those at Corinth to whom St Paul was writing had a foul and terrible past behind them. But past it was so long as they did not call evil good and good evil, so long as they knew and confessed that it was their sins which had brought the Lord to the Cross. Theirs and ours. It is the same Power which is behind Good Friday and Easter Day; the one Power that nothing can conquer—Love. God is Love. Lent is the fast of Love: Easter is Love's feast. There, if we intend to lead a new life, is the power for us. We are pledged to Christ, and His resurrection, in its power, is pledged to us. For the power of the Resurrection means the eternal life of Jesus; it is His Life that His rising again gave, and gives, to us; and about that—whoever doubts in what way He rose—there is no doubt at all; no doubt of the splendour and perfectness of His Life; no doubt at all that, if we truly will, it is that which we have come to share; it is that in which we stand; it is that in which we are saved.

If ye be risen with Christ, seek things above.
Hold this world's joy a bauble lightly priced,
Well lost for love, for God Whose Name is Love,
If ye be risen with Christ.

[1] Lord Salisbury. [2] *Early Letters of Marcus Dods, D.D.*, 80.

[1] A. J. Gossip, *The Galilean Accent*, 147.

And subtle sweet delights that once enticed,
Shall glance by harmless, with no art to move
Your soul, that keeps with Him a sweeter tryst.

Lo, for your death to sin, with Death He strove;
Lo, for your life the Lamb was sacrificed;
What, save the Gate of Life, can Death now prove
If ye be risen with Christ?

The Meaning of the Atonement

1 Cor. xv. 3.—'For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.'

In seeking to enter into the idea of atonement and of the Great Atonement as it is presented to us in the Bible, it is well to start from a verse like this, which is a plain, brief, and definite statement of a fact not liable to any difference of interpretation. The First Epistle to the Corinthians was written in any case within a year or two of A.D. 54, or some five-and-twenty years after the Crucifixion. But the statement goes back some way earlier, in the first instance to the time when St Paul first preached at Corinth—some four years before—and, behind that, to his first close intercourse with Christians soon after his conversion, which may have been less, and can hardly have been much more, than five years after the death of Christ. At that date he found a doctrine of Atonement commonly held and preached. So much is firm ground, a fixed landmark which cannot well be shaken. If we try to go back still further we are brought within the lifetime of our Lord Himself, and we may suppose that it had originated in some hint which had fallen from Him.

Now it is well known that there are two texts in the Synoptic Gospels which suggest that our Lord thought of His own death as atoning. The one is contained in the words which embody the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper, 'This is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many.' The other is the verse which appears identically in Mark and Matthew, 'The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.' This seems to be an indication that our Lord had in His mind the thought of the Suffering Servant of Second Isaiah.

1. In that wonderful group of prophecies in Isaiah the Servant of Jehovah is an ideal figure, which is capable of expansion or contraction, according to the particular object which the writer has specially before his mind. Sometimes he is thinking of an individual whose mission it is to convert or reconvert his own people; sometimes of a group who act together and suffer together in the same cause; and sometimes he generalizes yet more boldly and thinks of the whole nation in its ideal aspect as a missionary nation, which stands out as a witness for God among the peoples of the earth. In this character it attains to the height of its mission especially through its sufferings.

The writer certainly has this larger view before his mind. And yet, the traits of character in these passages are so distinct that they read like the biography of an individual. The Servant will 'not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.' 'He was despised and rejected of men.' 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.' In some conspicuous way it was clear that He was dying for others, and He died unresisting and uncomplaining. Yet He did not die in vain. 'He shall see his seed'—his spiritual children; 'he shall prolong his days'—through this spiritual posterity; 'and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand'—he will feel that he is an instrument for carrying out God's purposes. In that he has his reward and is satisfied. If he perishes, he perishes that others may live.

2. Now let us see what place the idea of Atonement holds in the teaching of St Paul. His contribution to the idea bears the stamp of a single mind, trained under peculiar conditions. We are never allowed to forget that St Paul had been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. He had been brought up intensively in the most characteristic learning of his nation; and he had applied that learning with a very subtle, vigorous, and enterprising mind. St Paul stands out in history as perhaps the most intense personality that ever lived. His mind is always active in the highest degree; and it

works on lines to which he seems to have been almost born, and which had been strengthened in him by education. And then, with the processes of reasoning thus determined, he fuses the result of his own personal experience—an experience rich, deep, and varied as we may well think had never before been the lot of any child of man. The personality and the experience together mark his astonishing greatness; the training marks his limitations. We speak of 'limitations'; and such they really are. But we must always remember that they are the limitations of a very powerful mind.

St Paul's doctrine of Atonement is part of another doctrine which is peculiarly his—the doctrine that we call that of Justification by Faith. There were two passages in the Old Testament which specially caught the Apostle's attention. One was from the Book of Genesis: 'Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness.' And the other was from the Prophecy of Habakkuk: 'The just—or righteous man—shall live by his faith.' In both these passages 'righteousness' was associated with 'faith.' It was faith by which he had his hold on Christ. Faith was the bond of union between his human soul and the Divine. Hence, after his conversion, he also felt himself brought into a right relation to Christ and to God. In other words, he was righteous in their sight. Apart from his progress in his Christian calling, the way was made clear before him; his sins were forgiven. If we ask how this state of things had been brought about, the answer is, because a great Divine act has intervened.

'Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by his blood, to shew his righteousness, . . . that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.'

'Redemption,' 'propitiation,' 'by his blood': it is the language of sacrifice—a language which St Paul uses sparingly, unlike the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

3. We have looked at the idea of Atonement as it is embodied in the Servant of Jehovah and as it enters into St Paul's doctrine. Now let us ask ourselves what there is of deep reality in these modes of conceiving of it, remembering that it is indeed only part of the whole.

(1) We have the idea of *vicarious suffering*; and some people shrink from that. Why, the world is full of it; and not only is the world full of it but it is one of the most precious things that the world contains. It might be said that there are two kinds of vicarious suffering, the unheroic and the heroic. We are not much impressed by the former just because it is so common. But let us think a moment. The son or the daughter, devoting and sacrificing his or her life to an exacting parent, or an affectionate and unselfish parent, devoting his life or her life to an exacting child—are not such things as these all round us? And are they not all the more precious because they are not noticed, and because the very sacrifice is often quite unconscious?

¶ The story is told in the *Spectator* of an unexpected visit that a Highland minister once paid to a cottage in one of the Western Isles of Scotland. It was the house of a widower, now a confirmed invalid, small and ill-appointed, though unusually orderly and fresh. The sick man's daughter, who was his sole attendant, was a mature, smart-looking woman, with a gentle voice and a quiet, dignified manner; and when the invalid was asked what he regarded as one of God's crowning mercies to himself, he said: 'Oh, sir, I have everything; have I not my Saviour and my dauchter?' 'That evening,' the narrator proceeds, 'I learned the secret of the lustre of that humble home. The daughter, their only child, had proved to be a clever pupil at the Clachan school, and with the unquenchable ambition of the West Highlander a profession was aimed at for her. She chose nursing. When fully qualified she found a post in a great London hospital. There her deftness and her devotion brought her under the notice of some leading London physicians. Critical cases were entrusted to her. Her native ability asserted itself and her gracious character ripened. Then a proposal, honouring to the medical profession, was made to her, that she should study and qualify as a doctor. The necessary funds would be provided, and her own intelligence would justify the experiment. So she became a medical student with every prospect of an assured professional career. It was then that from that far off Isle of the Western seas came the news of the mother's death and the need of the helpless invalid father. Renunciation took the place of ambi-

tion, and, throwing up everything, she came home to the "black house" to be eyes and hands and every human comfort to the lonely old man.'

And then there is the heroic kind on which the War threw a vivid light. It was for such deeds that the Victoria Cross was given. We think of the Victoria Cross as the highest distinction that can be conferred or won. But there is one yet higher: at least the posthumous V.C. is a step higher because the sacrifice has been of life itself. These deeds have not escaped notice; and to a certain extent they have had their reward, because we pursue both the deed and the doer beyond the grave with unbounded love and gratitude and reverence and admiration. That holds good of those who are known; and how many thousands there must be who are not known. Surely all this is reality. It is implanted deep in the nature of things. It stands high in the scale of values as they are in themselves and in the sight of God.

(2) Then there is another kind of reality. Take the institution of *sacrifice* in the earlier stages of the world's history. How widespread it was; how almost universal. How instinctive it seems to have been as an expression of worship. Like so many of these primitive institutions, we may well believe that those by whom it was first invented would have been quite unable to explain what they meant by it; and yet it was full of meaning—and that right meaning. That large-hearted prophet, Malachi, takes a wide survey of the world of his day and sees it everywhere prevailing, and everywhere acceptable and accepted by God. 'From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense is offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts.'

No doubt the rite of sacrifice was capable of being corrupted. It was adjusted to an imperfect and progressive state of things. In its earliest forms it was very often crude. But it was on so vast a scale that we must needs think of it as God's appointment. If we take the idea of sacrifice as a whole, it includes all the features to which exception may be taken: it includes propitiation and even expiation as well as vicariousness. But there is no harm in these ideas if we do not read it into them. Why do we so often put unworthy senses upon things when we might put worthy senses upon them?

What of propitiation? What is there wrong in seeking for the Divine favour? The Hebrews had a beautiful phrase: they spoke of 'making the face to shine,' and even of God making His own face to shine. What they meant was to bring over the face a smile of tenderness and love. There is doubtless truth in the 'gift-theory' of sacrifice: but why should there not be? We spoil it by imputing interested motives. That is just our cynicism, and nothing else. Take a child, with its Christmas presents. A great amount of childish thought, and a great amount of genuine affection often go to the making of those trivial offerings. They are made with the hope of winning that smile. It is just love responding to love. The smile perhaps is all that is given in return, and it is given not because of the value of the offering, but in response to the motive which lies behind it.

And in the same way with expiation. After all that, too, is only emphasized and intensified sorrow for sin, expressing itself in act.

Broadly speaking, these are the two great realities, or fields of reality, which converge upon and culminate in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Death of Christ

1 Cor. xv. 3.—'For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.'

We feel the story of the Passion is almost too holy and sacred to be discussed; on the other hand, we feel constrained and compelled to discuss it. Throughout the whole of the New Testament the Cross is so placed in the forefront, so much is made to depend upon it and flow from it, that we are under the intellectual necessity of seeking to discover what it was Jesus did for men. In a word, the central position the Cross occupies in the gospel constrains men to seek to 'understand' it, and to construct theories to explain the great transaction that was accomplished upon it.

There are those who tell us we ought to be satisfied with the *fact* of the Atonement without attempting to formulate theories about it.

But that is an absolutely impossible position, amounting as it does to a practical repudiation of the intellect. There is no fact in the world without its theory, and when we are told that the Cross is intimately, vitally connected with the forgiveness of sin and the salvation of the soul, we simply cannot help asking 'How?' 'Why?' The Cross was never meant to be a baffling, hopeless mystery. 'There may be,' as Dr Denney says, 'depths in it that we cannot fathom, just as the Divine nature itself has; but it will not be unintelligible any more than God Himself is unintelligible; if God is more fully present in it than in anything else in the world, it ought to be of all things the most luminous and the most susceptible of rational treatment.'

At the same time we must never forget that no account of the Cross can be complete. No theory of the Atonement—whether it be the moral, the federal, the representative or the substitutionary—can claim completeness. The fact is each theory sets forth one aspect of the truth, but the Cross embraces and transcends them all put together.

The Cross occupies the central place in the New Testament. 'All the light of sacred story,' says Sir John Bowring, 'gathers round its head sublime;' and so it does. It is the centre of gravity of the New Testament. 'I delivered unto you first of all,' says the Apostle Paul, 'that which also I received, how that Christ *died for our sins* according to the scriptures.' 'First of all'—this was Paul's primary and central message. '*First of all* . . . Christ died for our sins! That was the sum and substance, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end of Paul's preaching. And it was not Paul alone who gave the Cross this central and primary place. In doing this he was only following the example of the other Apostles who were in Christ before him. It was no message which he had himself invented which Paul preached to the Corinthians. He delivered to them only what he had received. In preaching as he did he was at one with Peter, and John, and James. 'Whether it be I or they—so we preached, and so ye believed.'

Now, what was it that the Apostles saw in the Cross which led them to give it this supreme and central place in their preaching?

1. They saw in it *the final and consummate revelation of the Divine Love.* The gospel the Apostles had to preach was, above all things else, a 'gospel of grace'—the gospel that God loved the world with a deep, strong, free, and infinite love. And for final proof of the reality of that love they pointed to the Cross. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, and to assure wayward, perverse, and sinful men of His love for them, He made the supreme and final sacrifice for them. Pilate wrote a superscription over the Cross to this effect: 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.' But the Apostles wrote another superscription over the Cross of Christ. It is written in a thousand tongues, and this is how it reads: 'God is Love.' The Cross is the supreme and final revelation of the Divine love. 'Herein is love,' says the Apostle John—here is love at its best and finest and purest—'not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' Notice the collocation, 'God loved us, and sent his Son.' Calvary is an expression in time of that eternal love that alone can pay the price of a regenerated world.

Yet there is a strange tendency in many minds to assume a certain antagonism between God and Christ. They picture Christ as interposing by His sacrifice to mollify and appease an angry and offended God. There is a picture in one of the Continental galleries which depicts God as shooting arrows at men, and Christ catching them and breaking them before they strike. The idea that underlies that blasphemous picture lurks in the minds of many Christians. No shadow of warrant is given in the Scriptures for any such idea. There God and Christ are always at one. From beginning to end the work of Christ was the work of God Himself. Far from needing to be propitiated, God Himself provided the Propitiation.

¶ A young licentiate of the Church happened to preach in the hearing of Donald Macleod a sermon on the ardour of St Paul; he spoke on some of the persuasions which had kindled the flame in the Apostle's heart. 'As soon as the idea of God's being reconciled to us in the Cross of Christ flashed on Paul,' so ran one of the sentences, 'he found his mind nimble and active as the morning air, his heart ringing with sweet and solemn tones, his will like a plunging horse eager to be away.' In the vestry at the close of the service Macleod

mingled a draught of criticism, to which, as was his wont, he did not forget to add a due measure of sweetness. 'That was not Paul's idea,' he said, 'nor is it true. God does not need to be reconciled to us. It is we who have to be reconciled to Him. God has ever been the gracious Father. The Cross but shows and makes effective His forgiving love.'[1]

2. The Apostles saw in the Cross *the Divine judgment upon sin.* 'For what the law could not do,' says Paul in one of the profoundest passages in that profound letter of his to the Romans, 'in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh'; or rather, as the Greek puts it, 'executed judgment upon sin in the flesh.' Death—the death of the Cross was God's judgment upon sin! Just because He identified Himself with man, shared his lot as a sinful being, He had to share in the judgment of sin, and that judgment we see on the Cross. And in forming an estimate of what that judgment was, do not let us confine our attention to our Lord's physical suffering. There has often been too much made of the bodily distress, and far too little of the spiritual anguish. We have talked, for instance, about the 'blood' as if the 'blood' itself constituted the efficacy of the sacrifice, instead of realizing that the blood is only the symbol of the outpoured and sacrificed life. It was not the physical suffering that constituted the awfulness of the Cross. It was the spiritual anguish our Lord passed through that made His death so awful. Go back to Gethsemane and read how He began to be exceeding sorrowful even unto death, and read on until you come to that point where the deep darkness settled on His soul, and He cried, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Who can plumb the depths of that woe? And that was God's judgment upon sin. 'The wages of sin is death,' says the Apostle. But death is not the mere ceasing of physical existence, for in that sense we all die—saint and sinner alike. For explanation of that term 'death' we must go to the Cross where Jesus submitted to become forsaken of God for sin. That is death—not the mere ceasing to breathe, but homelessness, forsakenness, the deep night.

One of the most deplorable characteristics of our day and time is the decay of the *sense of sin.* We have treated 'sin' as if it were a light thing. 'Sin!' said a French critic; 'I have abolished sin.' There are verses in the Bible, which speak of 'the wrath of God,' which are rarely referred to now; but ignore those solemn and austere verses as we may, sin is not a light thing. It is a terrible, an awful thing—so awful that the only wages meet for it is death. If we want to realize the enormity of sin let us stand before the Cross of Christ.

¶ Principal Rainy, leader of the United Free Church of Scotland, said: 'For myself, when I come to die, I think it will be with this prayer in my heart, "God be merciful to me a sinner."'

3. The Apostles saw in the Cross of Christ *the ground of pardon and forgiveness.* The New Testament writers all agree in making the death of Jesus Christ the ground of our forgiveness and acceptance with God. There are great difficulties in the way of giving an intelligible reason why this should be so, but there can be absolutely no doubt that this is the plain unequivocal teaching of the New Testament.

Listen to the various ways in which the Apostles state this stupendous fact. 'He died for our sins,' says Paul in the text; and in another place he waxes very bold and says, 'He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' And Peter speaks to the same effect. 'Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.' And John bears the same testimony. 'He is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.' There is but one conclusion from all this—Jesus Christ, on the Cross, in some wondrous way took our place; He was made sin for us; and the result is we are 'loosed from sin'; we are made the righteousness of God in Him.

¶ In his ashram one of the boys told Gandhi something that he believed, but later found out that the boy had lied to him. Gandhi called the school together and solemnly said, 'Boys, I am sorry to find out that one of you is a liar. As punishment I am going off and fast to-day.' That may be passed with a smile, but not if you knew the dead earnestness of Gandhi and the sheer moral weight of the man. There could not have been a more terrific punishment, for long after any physical pain from physical

[1] S. Smith, *Donald Macleod of Glasgow*, 15.

punishment would have died away there would persist the spiritual pain from the lashings of conscience awakened by the sufferings of the man who loved him. In the light of Gandhi's acting thus, it becomes easy for them to step up from the thought that if one man would take on himself suffering to bring a boy back from a lie to the truth, then if there were One divine enough and holy enough, he might take on his soul the very sin of a whole race to bring us back to good and to God. The Cross thus bursts into meaning when lighted up by this lesser act.[1]

¶ For years the Moravian missionaries toiled in Greenland teaching the natives about the Creation and the Fall, the Flood and the Dispersion, and so on, and all to no purpose. But one day John Beck read to a small company of them the old story of Christ's dying love. And one of them, Kayamak, with tears streaming down his face, said to him, 'Tell it me once more, for I too would be saved.' At last they had found the key to the Greenlanders' hearts.[2]

I bore with thee long weary days and nights,
Through many pangs of heart, through many tears;
I bore with thee, thy hardness, coldness, slights,
For three-and-thirty years.

Who else had dared for thee what I have dared?
I plunged the depth most deep from bliss above;
I not My flesh, I not My spirit spared:
Give thou Me love for love.

. . . . .

Thee did nails grave upon My hands, thy name
Did thorns for frontlets stamp between Mine eyes:
I, Holy One, put on thy guilt and shame;
I, God, Priest, Sacrifice.

A thief upon My right hand and My left;
Six hours alone, athirst, in misery:
At length in death one smote My heart and cleft
A hiding-place for thee.

Nailed to the racking cross, than bed of down
More dear, whereon to stretch Myself and sleep:
So did I win a kingdom,—Share My crown;
A harvest,—Come and reap.[3]

[1] E. Stanley Jones, *The Christ of the Indian Road*, 98.
[2] J. D. Jones, *Elims of Life*, 60.
[3] Christina G. Rossetti.

According to the Scriptures

1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.—'How that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.'

'According to the scriptures'—that is the precise phrase which describes every step of our Lord's life here on earth. With deliberate intention, with unfaltering patience, with unconquerable courage, He set Himself to frame His life entirely and exactly on the lines laid down in these old Books. He took them as His daily manual. He placed Himself consistently under their pressure, and accepted from them the mould in which His career should be fashioned. They formed the store of resources on which alone He was to depend.

1. 'According to the scriptures.' We have grown into the habit of associating this phrase merely with this or that superficial incident in which His life repeated some experience of the Old Testament. 'He fulfilled a prophecy,' we say. It is taken as if it were a purely external correspondence, and as if He had done it merely to prove His Messiahship in a crude, mechanical way. This is what we had been taught to think in the schoolroom, misinterpreting the ancient formula, 'This was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet.' And then in later years we had seen, perhaps, the doubtfulness of such a fulfilment. At the best it was a very mechanical and superficial form of evidence, open to every critical cavil, and singularly unconvincing to our modern temperament. But what if these incidental coincidences are meant to be taken not so much as complete in themselves, but rather as the symptoms of an underlying unity which is at work from end to end of the course of events, carrying the whole immense movement of the national life of Israel forward towards that supreme moment in which it is to find its consummation? Then, if so, the separate and special prophecies fulfilled are but fragmentary samples of that deep prophetic movement underlying them.

The real prophecy of Christ lies in the continuous historical evolution of Israel. It was the entire life of the chosen nation which our Lord summed up in Himself. Its varied fortunes, its aspirations, its bitter lessons, its

pathetic expiations, its momentous tragedies—all passed in to build up the ultimate passion of desire which He entered to satisfy. And He met it all full-face. He surrendered Himself to its pressure. He set Himself to garner its wisdom, to verify its hopes, to purge and transfigure its judgments. So the whole Scripture became His own, for He realized in His own Person that which Israel stood for through its past. In taking human flesh He took it in the form which the Jews had prepared for Him, and became an Israelite of the Israelites, born under the law as David's son. Therefore, in taking that flesh, He adopted for His own all that was distinctive in the moral and religious growth which these Books recorded. There was no moment in His life in which He did not act as a Jew, under the limitations and the conditions imposed upon Him by those two thousand years which had made Israel what it was at the hour when Jesus was born. He took it up just at the point of evolution which it had naturally reached. His intellectual outlook, His experimental range, His speech, were all given to Him by it. So vitally, so intimately, did the normal action of heredity and of environment tell upon Him to the full. The recorded past all prophesied of Him. That is why these Scriptures spoke of Him, why Moses told of Him, and Abraham saw His day. The Books were alive with the meaning that He gave to them. They were waiting for the solution; they were unfulfilled until He brought into play the final word for which they yearned. This is what we mean by the prophetic character of the Bible. It reports the story of an evolution which is only intelligible by its close in Jesus Christ. And is this not a natural conception with which all our latest science delights to tally? Have not we here a motive for Bible belief which all modern experience confirms?

2. And not only did our Lord as a fact consummate the historical process which the Books record, not only did He live a life which turned out to be the culmination of the Jewish ideal, but *He consciously recognized this.* He knew it and spoke familiarly of it. We are quite certain of this from the original memoirs of Him which we possess. He told His disciples plainly and positively that the Scriptures were being fulfilled in His actions. He recognized Himself as the uttermost issue and crown of all the story. He deliberately applied words out of the old Books to Himself. At certain moments we can feel how He has brooded over the ancient words, and fed upon them, and gathered in their deepest significance. We can be sure that He has pondered long over them. For instance, 'If David then called him Lord, how is he his son?' He has gone behind the words, He has got at their secret. He has thought much about it. From a boy it had been so. He is found already to be about His Father's business, asking and answering questions raised by the Scriptures.

Again, we can see how steeped His memory was in the words of Scripture, so that every incident that occurred to Him called up some ancient text. And above all, in hours of crisis and agony, it is the Scripture that rises at once to His lips. 'It is written.'

'How otherwise can the scriptures be fulfilled?' That is the phrase which admits us into the very heart of the matter. He is here on earth to fulfil Scripture. He is here, that is, to take up the exact conditions which the history of the Jews had handed over to Him. Those conditions must never be repudiated or refused. He must never require a higher power to intervene, and to spare Him the impact of that experience which the past had made necessary. There, in what Israel had contributed to the human story, lay His sole material and equipment. He must never quarrel with His tools, or complain of His materials. With them, by them, through them, His work must be done. Out of them He must fashion the new man.

3. 'The Scriptures'—those are the witnesses, then, to the actual historical reality of His human nature. For those Scriptures retain and embody the experiences of living men and living women who had acted their part in their days. Those Scriptures give the full measure of what life had actually been in the flesh for those on earth—the height of their hopes, the depth of their agony. They offer a scale of man's capacities for sorrow and joy. All that goes to the making of man, in storm and calm, in peace and war, in darkness and light is there, embodied and expressed in those amazing pages. It is the gathered and concentrated essence of sensitive humanity. A human document, indeed, these Scriptures! And our Lord, there-

fore, will verify His humanity to us by adopting as His own every cry that is recorded to have fallen from human lips. There shall be no lone soul in the past who has gone down into the pit, broken and scorned, who shall be able to say that his grief was unshared or his death unremembered.

It cost Him dear so to conform to human necessities, so to accept the limitations set upon Him by the past. For we are allowed to see Him for one strange hour in His temptation, in the wilderness, wrestling with the strong desire to escape from these harsh fetters—to be free to go His own way unhindered by human circumstance. There, hungry and exhausted, He recognized the narrow bounds in which He was to work out His task; He bound Himself down to live out His days and win His victory in rigid obedience to the necessity of circumstance and the determination of the past.

He took over what He found—the exact form of our human story. That is what He has to redeem. He takes it as He finds it, with all its infirmities, burdens, and sorrows. That is what we joyfully proclaim when we say, 'He died and rose again, according to the scriptures.' That which dies was ours, so the Scriptures witnessed. They identified it with all that was most intimate to man. And, therefore, that which rose again is ours. It rises 'according to the scriptures.' It rises in obedience to all that human experience had led up to and required and anticipated. Christ's Resurrection is the most natural thing in the world. It could not be that the humanity which He took could be holden of death. Christ, in assuming for His own all that was ours, made it impossible for human nature to be arrested and broken off short by death. Redeemed humanity rose in Christ to its fulfilment—obedient to the natural conditions, not defying them; through and by means of its own past, not by any violent breach with it.

4. We, too, have our 'Scriptures.' Back behind us lies the past, the past of the race, the past of our own immediate forefathers, the past that history has built up and passed down to us. We take over our burdened inheritance with its damaged resources, its spoilt tools, its aggravating limitations. The laws of fate press hard. The mills of God grind out their inevitable judgments. 'Oh,' we say, 'if only circumstances were not so dead against us; if only our own inherited nature were not so difficult and so ingrained; if only we could be given a clear start; if only we were free to choose our way; if only God would give us a fair chance! Then we would gladly respond to His call, then we would make something of this life. Then we would step out on to the road of righteousness. It is only these cruel limitations of ours which take the heart out of our efforts.' How natural that longing for the clear course, the clean canvas. Ever since Plato first formulated the need, the cry has gone up from souls that beat against the bars, 'Give me the canvas clean; give me a fresh start.'

¶ F. W. Boreham says: I found on board the *Fram* a canary. A brave little bird, who had been taken from its own soft skies and balmy air to the South Pole! And the beauty of it is that he sang there, and sang out bravely his very blithest songs! Like Browning's 'wise thrush,' he

> Sings each song twice over,
> Lest you should think he never could recapture
> The first fine careless rapture!

I should like to write to all our missionaries and tell them this story of the canary at the Pole. I am sure it would help them to sing their sweetest songs in strange lands. Not that missionaries are the only people in the world who should be told of the *Fram's* canary. By no means. A young man tells me that the office in which he earns his living is such an uncongenial place for the development of the religious life. I dare say! The Pole is not particularly congenial to a canary! But he sang there for all that. A girl tells me that it is simply impossible to be a Christian in her workroom! Really! If a canary can sing a throat-splitting song at the Pole, surely a Christian can continue to maintain his testimony in the most chilling and disheartening atmosphere.[1]

Christ took life where and as He found it. He accepted the grim necessities of the past. He would not have an iota changed in the stern law under which He bowed. As with the Master, so with the servant. Whatever our lot, whatever our character, whatever the past has handed down—with that be satisfied. That

[1] *Mountains in the Mist*, 220.

is our appointed task; that is what we must justify and carry through. Take it up as it stands. It is good enough for you, for it was good enough for the Lord Christ. With that, and out of that, work out your salvation. It may be changed and transformed, but that which is to be transformed must first be accepted.

There is no corner so obscure or so obstructed that its redemption is impossible. There is no character so twisted or so maimed that it cannot be sanctified. There is no weakness, no thorn in the flesh, which God's strength cannot turn into perfection. For He is with us, our Lord and Master, who Himself passed through the discipline, and took up this weary world just as He found it.

¶ 'Here or nowhere; now or never; where thou art, not where thou wouldst be; with what thou hast, not with what you would choose to have; do thou thy work. Make good thy purpose. Save thy soul. Serve thy fellows.'[1]

[1] Carlyle.

ST PETER'S FIRST EASTER DAY

1 Cor. xv. 5.—'He was seen of Cephas.'
Luke xxiv. 34.—'The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.'

From Friday till the dawn of the first day of the week had been like a death-time to Simon Peter; but it was to be followed by a time of new life. No man more truly died and rose again with Christ than did Simon Peter. Those lonely hours were the death of his old, self-confident spirit. The Resurrection morning brought fresh life to the crushed, sin-stained, and sorrowing heart of the fallen disciple.

Well might Peter think, when the full consciousness of what he had done flashed upon him, that he had sinned past forgiveness. Well might he wonder whether there could be any real recovery from a fall so grievous and so deep. He stood, indeed, on the very brink of the precipice of despair. And men like Peter are specially liable to despond. His temperament was enthusiastic and excitable. He was one of those who are on the crest of the wave one moment and down in the trough of the sea the next. The tempter is never far off from such men in such moments, to whisper, 'For you there is no repentance. You have passed the stage where men may turn. No star of hope can ever rise in your sky.' Such thoughts and such whisperings, no doubt, filled the mind of Peter in those awful hours and days after his fall. Had he been given over to this despair, where would it have led him? He might have gone back to the fair Lake of Galilee, to stifle all the great thoughts that had once been his; he might have stepped into Matthew's shoes and become a tax-gatherer at Capernaum; or he might have immersed himself in business, and have tried to forget that the words had ever been uttered in his hearing. 'What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' But he was led all the time by Him who loved him. Let us hear the story.

I

The Master's Remembrance

1. We are not told what happened to Peter after he went out and wept bitterly. We are not told whither he turned his steps. But we find him on the Easter morning dwelling with John and Mary the mother of Jesus.

These days must have been very miserable for him. The disciples do not need to read their resolutions of censure. The fallen Peter sees them gather their garments about them and suddenly, in a constrained way, cease their conversation and start as though they would withdraw themselves from his presence. And the great head droops, and he turns to go down the stairs and out into the world, where there is no one to cast upon him a sympathetic look. But hark! there are other feet upon the stairs, there are other hands upon the door-latch, the door swings open, and the women fresh from the sepulchre come bursting in, crying with united voice, 'Jesus is risen!' And they say, 'He wants to see us all again in Galilee. And Peter

—where's Peter? Peter, He said especially that He wanted to see you.'

'And Peter'—Mark alone gives us this. The other Evangelists might pass it by; but how could Peter ever forget what that message of pardon and restoration meant to him, and how could Peter's mouthpiece leave it out? Is there anything in the Gospels more beautiful, or fuller of long-suffering and thoughtful love, than that message from the risen Saviour to the denier? And how delicate the love which, by calling him Peter, not Simon, reinstates him in his official position by anticipation.

¶ 'On the 22nd of July 1680, that happy day,' Madame Guyon says, 'my soul was delivered from all its pains. From the time of the first letter from Father La Combe, I began to recover a new life. I was then, indeed, only like a dead person raised up, who is in the beginning of his restoration, and raised up to a life of hope rather than of actual possession; but on this day I was restored, as it were, to perfect life, and set wholly at liberty. I was no longer depressed, no longer borne down under the burden of sorrow. I had thought God lost, and lost for ever; but I found Him again. And He returned to me with unspeakable magnificence and purity.'[1]

2. Peter and John sprang to their feet, went forth on the moment, and ran to the sepulchre, both men doing according to their kind. The younger ran faster than his companion. He looked into the tomb, and saw the wrappings lying; but the reverent awe which holds back finer natures kept him from venturing in. Peter is not said to have looked before entering. He loved with all his heart, but his love was impetuous and practical, and he went straight in, and felt no reason why he should pause. His boldness encouraged his friend, as the example of a strong nature does.

Thus it is that men are ever touching unconsciously the springs of motion in each other; thus it is that one man, without thought or intention, or even a consciousness of the fact, is ever leading some other after him. Little does Peter think, as he comes up where his doubting brother is looking into the sepulchre, and goes straight in, that he is drawing in his brother Apostle after him. As little does John think, when he loses his misgivings, and goes into the sepulchre after Peter, that he is following his brother.

¶ Some people seem to have almost exactly the influence of *Music*. It is an inarticulate influence. It does not communicate ideas, but it creates moods. It is incapable of analysis. Men ask you to give an account of these people's power over you, and you cannot. You tell your story and the listener asks, 'Is that all?' and wonders at your delusion. All that you can do is to say, 'Come and see,' as after vainly trying to describe the power of a piece of music you take your friend to hear it. All influence of man over man, however rich it may be in the imparting of ideas and the awakening of the moral sense, seems to be incomplete unless there is in it something of this musical power of creating moods.[1]

¶ A great many years ago, when I was quite a little boy, among my schoolfellows I had two brothers, who, between them, illustrated what then seemed to me, and what still seems to me, the ideal of boyish excellence. The younger of them had singular gentleness, kindness, sympathy; he was strong, but his strength had no roughness in it; his spirit and manner were always affectionate, gracious, and beautiful. The elder, who died in early manhood, was frank, bold, courageous, and adventurous. The younger brother left England soon after I entered the ministry. I met him more than thirty years later in a distant part of the world, and I shall never forget his emotion when I told him how much I owed to him. Neither of them knew at that time how much he was doing for me: but to those two schoolfellows of mine I am under far larger moral obligations than to any of my teachers.[2]

3. John believed, but Peter was still in the dark. Again the former had outrun his friend. His more sensitive nature, not to say his deeper love—for that would be unjust, since their love differed in quality more than in degree—had gifted him with a more subtle and swifter-working perception. Perhaps if Peter's heart had not been oppressed by his sin, he would have been readier to feel the sunshine of the wonderful hope. We condemn ourselves to the shade when we deny our Lord by deed or word.

[1] T. C. Upham, *The Life of Madame Guyon*, 125.

[1] A. V. G. Allen, *Phillips Brooks*, 380.

[2] *The Life of R. W. Dale of Birmingham*, by his son, 7.

¶ To Blake, as to some artists and to most devout people, there was nothing in vision to correct, nothing even to modify. His language in all his letters and in much of his printed work is identical with the language used by the followers of Wesley and Whitefield at the time in which he was writing. In Wesley's journal you will find the same simple and immediate consciousness of the communion of the soul with the world of spiritual reality: not a vague longing, like Shelley's, for a principle of intellectual beauty, nor an unattained desire after holiness like that of the conventionally religious person, but a literal 'power of conversing with Paradise,' as Blake called it, and as many Methodists would have been equally content to call it.[1]

¶ The healthy mystic is not a visionary—he is only such in so far as his ideal calls for new conquests, involves fresh loyalty, and summons to ever-increasing victories for the faith. The mystics—the 'beautiful souls' as Hegel calls them—have ever been the genuine reformers of the Church and through it of society; their vision has inspired at once new tasks, and has girded for fresh service as God's life-plan for each. Tauler said, 'If I were not a priest, I should esteem it a gift of the Holy Ghost that I was able to make shoes,' and Eckhart's plan was a healthy-minded one: 'Take the nearest way Godward, but be always sure to keep in motion that way, until God's rest come of itself.' The quietest's mood is a form of degenerate mysticism. The healthy mystic is first a man of vision, that he may be one of action. He is not an idle dreamer, nor does he sit with folded hands, dwelling upon the New Jerusalem. He becomes the man of strong action, faithful endeavour, and resolute, consecrated aim.[2]

II

Restoration

1. Next to the remorse of Judas, who could not endure to live any longer, must have been the sorrow of Peter. The worst of it was that it would seem too late to make any amends. The most bitter sorrow is the thought that we have been unkind to the dead. Peter must have been racked with torment as he thought of what that last mournful look of his Master meant. By an unspeakably wonderful mercy Peter obtained a release from this sorrow, which, with most who experience it, can never be fully removed. The first of the Twelve to see their risen Lord was Peter, but no account of the interview has been preserved. It would almost seem as if our Lord knew that Peter would find it very difficult to take his place among his brother Apostles again until he had made his peace with his Master. There should not be one moment of needless delay, and so at last they met. We know no more. Nor would we wish to know. No one respects more the sacredness of any secret confidence than Jesus our Saviour. And we may love Him for this with all our hearts and souls. Such treasures of unknown love are stored with Him, the tender confidences of so many hearts.

But of one thing we may be sure. The interview did not close before the Apostle had heard those words of 'absolution and release' which made his hope of pardon a certainty, and his prospect of a new and better life mighty for good in the Master's service a reality. One more stage was yet to come. His public restoration to the apostolate in the presence of his fellow disciples. And this took place afterwards at the Sea of Galilee. He would not have wished it otherwise. A public restoration alone could wipe out completely the public denial. But the real and most important work was done here, when the soul of the Apostle was laid bare beneath the gaze of the Master, and the reality of his pardon was borne in upon him.

'There are moments,' says Cardinal Newman, 'when a man is only conscious of two existences—his own and God's.' And this is one. When we have fallen into grievous sin, it must be between Christ and the soul alone that the reconciliation can take place, and the sinner be restored. Man may sometimes help, and the absolution of Christ may sometimes have greater power when coming through human lips. But the soul itself must draw nigh in penitence to the great Absolver. And He alone can send home the words of hope fresh and clear to the heart of the sinner.

¶ Each bud flowers but once and each flower has but its minute of perfect beauty; so, in the garden of the soul each feeling has, as it were, its flowering instant, its one and only moment of expansive grace and radiant kingship. Each

[1] A. Symons, *William Blake*, 16.
[2] D. Butler, *George Fox in Scotland*, 86.

star passes but once in the night through the meridian over our heads and shines there but an instant; so, in the heaven of the mind each thought touches its zenith but once, and in that moment all its brilliancy and all its greatness culminate. Artist, poet, or thinker—if you want to fix and immortalize your ideas or your feelings, seize them at this precise and fleeting moment, for it is their highest point. Before it, you have but vague outlines or dim presentiments of them. After it, you will have only weakened reminiscence or powerless regret; that moment is the moment of your ideal.[1]

2. Simon Peter is restored; but it is the tender love of Christ that restores him. Experience has taught him a bitter lesson. He has been compelled to face his own weakness in the discovery of the baseness to which it had led him. But experience, while it could teach through his weakness, could not revive his heart or restore him to life's work. He has learned not to rely upon himself; experience could teach him thus far; but, even so, he might have fallen into doubtful, hesitating ways, and become a weak and vacillating man. But behind the teaching of experience stood Christ. His eyes of love were on His disciple. He gave the helping hand which lifted Peter out of the deep. He cheered him with that forgiveness which sent him out into the world a softened and humbled man. He inspired him with that love which made him a courageous ardent disciple. He filled him with living and patient tenderness that he might be a helper of the weak, and a friend of the fallen.

¶ It seemed to me that David was haunted by a grim spectre that he could not lay even if he would, and that he would not lay even if he could. And yet how his whole heart sang! How was it? And I thought that the Apostle answered me. David liked to have his sin ever before him—terrifying as the shocking apparition was—in order to keep fresh and sweet and warm within his soul the rapture of the Divine forgiveness and the infinite tenderness of the Divine love.[2]

3. How do we get the Peter of the Acts of the Apostles out of the Peter of the Gospels? Is there any way of explaining that revolution of character which befell him and all of them, except the old-fashioned one that the *something* which came in between was the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the consequent gift of joy and peace in Him, a joy that no troubles or persecutions could shake, a peace that no conflicts could for a moment disturb? If it is not a fact, account for the existence of the Church, and for the change in the character of its members. We shall never get a reasonable theory of these two facts until we believe that He rose from the dead. In His right hand He carried peace, and in His left joy. He gave these to them, and therefore 'out of weakness they were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.'

The story of the restoration of Peter is one that has brought hope to many who have fallen away. Of all kinds of sinners these are in the saddest case. For to them comes the poignant sorrow of having failed and fallen when they might have stood and gone onward. There is for them a consciousness of lost days, lost opportunities, weakened spiritual powers, experiences bought only by a certain irreparable loss. This makes the anguish of their remorse, and the danger of despair. And to such, the two words 'and Peter' have sometimes been like the very voice of the God of hope and comfort. For what Christ did once He can do again.

¶ I never go into the pulpit on Easter morning without being thrilled by the remembrance that all Western Christendom is exulting and triumphing in the Resurrection of our Lord. In the presence of the Cross and the open Sepulchre all the differences which separate those who are conscious of having been redeemed through Christ are forgotten.[1]

Words cannot utter
  Christ His returning:
Mankind, keep jubilee,
  Strip off your mourning,
Crown you with garlands,
  Set your lamps burning.

Speech is left speechless;
  Set you to singing,
Fling your hearts open wide,
  Set your bells ringing:
Christ the Chief Reaper
  Comes, His sheaf bringing.

[1] *Amiel's Journal*, 5.
[2] F. W. Boreham, *Mountains in the Mist*, 70.

[1] *The Life of R. W. Dale of Birmingham*, by his son, 329.

Earth wakes her song-birds,
Puts on her flowers,
Leads out her lambkins,
Builds up her bowers:
This is man's spousal day,
Christ's day and ours.[1]

His Reappearance to James

1 Cor. xv. 7.—'After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.'

It is one of the signs of the inimitable truthfulness and power of Scripture, that again and again, by a few simple touches, it enables us to realize the characters of those of whom it speaks. There are many whose lives would occupy only two or three verses, whom, nevertheless, from the inspired power with which they are delineated, we are enabled to represent to ourselves in their distinctest personality. Still more is this the case when we also possess some of their utterances and writings. And such a picture we can paint of James, one of the 'brothers of the Lord.'

1. In the household at Nazareth there were brothers and sisters. When Jesus appeared in the Synagogue of Nazareth, after His return from the Jordan, and delivered His message to the people, His fellow-villagers said to each other, 'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?'

All through childhood and youth James would be associated with Jesus. At school, in the Synagogue, in acquiring a knowledge of the Law, in attendance at the annual Passover at Jerusalem, and at the carpenter's bench, they would be much in each other's company. Both lads were doubtless devoted students of their Religion, and in that Jewish home the teaching would be in keeping with the best traditions of their race.

St Matthew tells us that Joseph, his father, was a 'just' or 'righteous' man, and this was the title by which James himself was afterwards known. To a Jew the word implied not merely being impartial and upright, but also having a studied and even scrupulous reverence for everything prescribed by the Law. The Sabbath, the synagogue worship, the feasts and fasts, purification, tithes, all the moral and ceremonial ordinances of the Law—these were the things on which the just man bestowed a loving care, and in which he preferred to do more than was required, rather than the bare minimum insisted on by the Rabbis. It was in a home of which righteousness of this kind was the characteristic that James was reared.

That it was a beautiful household in which he was brought up, well governed, happily trained, we may well believe. She who was honoured above all women by being privileged to be the mother of Jesus, and to train Him in His childhood, must have been a good mother to all her children. The presence of her sons with her, on more than one occasion, seems to indicate that the domestic ties were close and warm, that it was a happy, united household till an awful tragedy temporarily scattered it. But more we cannot say. That the influence of the Perfect Child shed a radiance of unseen joy and an atmosphere of purity all around Him wherever He went is what we should all have expected. And yet the family may have been slow to perceive its rare significance. Evidently there was nothing outwardly abnormal about His life and action.

We cannot perhaps greatly wonder that His brothers and sisters failed to discern the true greatness of Jesus. They were too near to Him. Mary alone had had strange thoughts about her unique Son ever since that first visit of Jesus to Jerusalem at the time of the Passover. But she kept all these things, pondering them in her heart; and nothing was said in the home lest feelings of jealousy should be aroused in the family. With the austere James, with his profound reverence for the Law of Moses, it was difficult to argue. To him, the open mind, the sweet reasonableness of Jesus, may well have given offence. It is not the statement of a general truth only to which Jesus gave expression when He said to the people, 'A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and among his own kin *and in his own house.*'[1]

¶ There is a famous story told concerning James Russell Lowell. In the days of his youth he spent one memorable summer vacation in the White Mountain district. One day when

[1] Christina G. Rossetti.

[1] T. E. Miller, *Portraits of Men of the New Testament*, 78.

enjoying a stroll through the Franconia Notch, he became absorbed in conversation with a man who was in charge of a saw-mill. The man chatted on, feeding his mill with logs the while. Presently the poet asked his new acquaintance if he could direct him to a point from which he could obtain a good view of the 'Old Man of the Mountain.' 'Dunno,' replied the man, 'never seed it!' Lowell immediately expressed his astonishment that any one living so near such a marvellous spectacle, which people came from long distances to see, should never have taken the pains to gaze upon it. 'And how far have you come?' asked the man. With evident pride the poet answered that he had come from Boston. 'D'you tell?' exclaimed the countryman, 'I'd like to see Boston. Why, just to stand for once on Bunker Hill! You've been there often, likely?' And James Russell Lowell confessed with shame and confusion of face that he never had![1]

2. It was not only during those thirty years at home that their eyes had been holden that they should not know Him; but also during those three years of His public and gracious ministry they still closed their minds against Him. They heard His message, they saw His miracles, but still they refused to recognize in Him the Messiah of their people. They looked upon Him as a dreamer, as beside Himself; and on one occasion, led by James, they thought it their duty to try and restrain Him by force.

We hear and see nothing of His brothers in those dark days preceding the Crucifixion. Where were they? That they were in Jerusalem on the occasion of this Passover is almost certain, but they seem to have remained passive spectators of all that was taking place. Mary alone was brave enough to keep by her Son, still believing in Him, and greatly wondering what the final issue might be. The apparent defeat of the Crucifixion was followed by the triumph of the Resurrection.

Within a few weeks after His resurrection, the brethren of Jesus were gathered with His followers in Jerusalem, and evidently belonged to the company of His disciples. In the interval, therefore, they must have become convinced of Jesus' Messiahship. When and in what circumstances their conversion took place we are not told; but St Paul mentions the appearance of the risen Jesus to James, and separates it from His appearances to Peter, to the Twelve, and to the five hundred brethren, in such a way as to imply that it took place later than the others.

The place cannot be determined. It may have been Galilee; it may have been Jerusalem. If James was not in Jerusalem at the Passover, the place was probably somewhere in Galilee, possibly Nazareth. Had any rumours of the Resurrection previously reached James? Did his mother inform him that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead and had spoken with the Twelve? Had his doubts vanished, or was he still in perplexity? Whatever his state of mind, he soon received personal confirmation of the Resurrection. How deep would be that brother's self-reproach and shame!—that he of all others should not have recognized the Messiah! that he should have been deaf and blind to the evidence that persuaded strangers. The interview dispelled for ever his own conception of the Messiah, and rendered him thenceforward a wholehearted and energetic Christian.

I looked at life with all-unseeing eyes,
Unable to discern the deeper thing
Or dive below the surface to the spring,
Until thou camest as a glad surprise.
And now to me the smallest bird that flies
Twitters a song which seraphim might sing;
While roadside flowers a sacred message bring,
And teach those truths that make the angels wise.
I cannot tell thee how thy passing touch
Had power the underlying thought to show
Till all the world was changed because of thee:
Nor do I care to measure overmuch
The why and wherefore: this one thing I know,
That I, who once was blind, now clearly see.[1]

3. A remarkable thing in the early days of the Christian Church was the rapid rise of James to a foremost position. Within ten years he had become the head of the Church at Jerusalem. While the rest of the Apostles went hither and thither preaching the gospel, James seems to have remained permanently in Jerusalem.

There are several references in the New Testa-

[1] F. W. Boreham, *The Golden Milestone*, 113.

[1] Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler.

ment to James after the Ascension. About A.D. 38 St Paul paid a visit to Jerusalem, and stayed fifteen days with St Peter seeing no other Apostle 'save James the Lord's brother.' Some fourteen years later (about A.D. 51) St Paul was again at Jerusalem. At this visit the leaders of the Church, James, Peter, and John, after hearing his report of his first missionary journey, signified their approval of his work, and 'gave the right hand of fellowship,' agreeing that Paul and Barnabas should preach to the Gentiles and they themselves to the circumcision. This visit is more fully described in the Acts, where James appears as president of the Council held to consider how far the Gentile Christians should be required to conform to the customs of the Jews. It is James who sums up the discussion and proposes the resolution which is carried, giving liberty to the Gentile Christians. At the close of his third missionary journey (A.D. 58) St Paul was again in Jerusalem and was gladly received by the brethren. In the house of James, and in presence of the elders, the Apostle rehearsed one by one the things which God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry; and the Church rejoiced in the manifold tokens of the success of the gospel and glorified God. It was then that James and the elders warned St Paul of the strong feeling of a section of the Jews against him by the report that he had taught the Jews of the Dispersion to abandon circumcision.

This is the last glimpse we get in New Testament story of James the Righteous, the pillar or bulwark of his people as he was called.[1]

James was a great figure. A strong man, he had the rigidity of his strength; a safe man, he had the natural conservatism which accompanies steadfastness. He had zeal enough to rejoice in the daring radicalism of Peter, and breadth and spirituality enough to sympathize with the grand universalism of Paul; but for himself, he was always place-bound and parochial, and Christianity always remained to him an offshoot, though immeasurably the greatest offshoot, of Judaism.

After thirty years of unceasing work He suffered martyrdom about the year A.D. 63.

[1] T. E. Miller.

The Manifestation to Paul

1 Cor. xv. 8.—'And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.'

THERE are those who assert that St Paul's gospel was essentially founded on an 'ideal' Christ and not on an 'historical' Jesus; but this only illustrates the process of fastening upon one set of facts, and ignoring, on the other side, facts that are fundamental. For all the apostles the historical Jesus was a revelation of the ideal and eternal Christ, but each of the two sides was necessary to the other.

No modern can enter more profoundly into the power of the spiritual perception of the Son of God than Paul could do. But he also knew that the authority for his message lay in the historical facts of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He did not weave an ideal Christ out of his own inner consciousness, but accepted with joy the Christ revealed in Jesus who died and rose again. Hence he regarded the evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus as fundamental to his gospel, and it is with triumph and humility that he ranges himself with the witnesses who had actually seen the risen Lord. What, then, is his testimony concerning the Resurrection of Jesus?

1. St Paul regarded the appearance of the risen Christ to him as a necessary condition of his apostleship. 'Then he appeared to all the apostles. And last of all he appeared to me also, as to one untimely born.'

He regarded the appearance of Jesus to him on the way to Damascus as essentially one with the pre-Ascension appearances to the earlier apostles. As he was last of the apostles, and definitely added his name to the list of the chosen band, so the Master appeared to him last of all, to qualify him for being one of the witnesses to His resurrection from the dead. The appearance at Damascus was the last of the significant series of manifestations which began on the day of His Resurrection, appeared to cease on His Ascension, but flashed forth once more to call Saul the persecutor to become the Apostle to the Gentiles.

St Paul clearly admits that this appearance lacked some of the elements possessed by the earlier manifestations of the risen Christ. It

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was not only that He appeared to him last of all, but there had been an important break in the series. Paul was not 'born' into the apostleship in a regular way, and could not share the regular manifestation. He was like one born untimely, and has to be treated on special and irregular lines.

The contrast which the Apostle draws between himself and the other Apostles is obvious. The appearances of the Saviour to them had some common and familiar elements which were absent from the vision and witness of Paul. The form in which Jesus manifested Himself during the forty days was in some respects startlingly similar to the Jesus who had been crucified and laid in the grave. He walked and talked with His disciples as in the days before His crucifixion. He showed them His hands and feet, with the prints of the nails still to be discerned—

> The arm which held the children, the pale hand
> That gently touched the eyelids of the blind
> And opened passive to the cruel nail.

He even partook of food before them. They were thus able to trace their crucified Lord by regular stages of identification along well-defined planes of investigation. Such elements as these were shorn away for the 'untimely born' Apostle. For him the risen Lord appeared in a flash of glory which wrought blindness in his gazing eyes.

Yet, for all that, Paul knew that it was a genuine manifestation of the personal risen Jesus, that it was one in essence with the previous manifestations, and that it was completely valid for his commission as an apostle and a witness to the Resurrection. He is sacredly reticent with regard to the central wonder of the vision of Damascus. He tells us of the light which he saw, and of the voice which he heard. One thing is clear: it was the Lord in His body of glory who fixed Himself in Paul's mind and heart and imagination from that time onwards. Those who credit Paul with having created an ideational Christ will do well to note his emphasis upon the risen body of the Saviour. Paul's Christ is the Christ of the Resurrection and of the resurrection body. Like the others, he could say 'I have seen the Lord.'

Paul was both too sagacious and too honest to make his apostleship depend upon an experience of which he was not absolutely certain. It is to be noted that he strictly distinguishes between this personal and bodily appearance of Christ and all other kinds of visions and experiences which came to him in abundance. So far was his mind from being liable to confusion by trance or hallucination, that he was accustomed to analyse his varied experiences in what we may fairly call a scientific manner. His spiritual experience of the indwelling and fellowship of Christ was of the most intense kind. 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' But this was recognized by him as a mighty process within his own spirit. He records a trance into which he was cast, and applies to the statement of it psychological deliberation. He marks its subtle evasiveness, and tries to bring it down to definition. Very soberly he concludes, 'Whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell.' He received wonderful manifestations of the spiritual presence of his Lord. Thus we read in Acts xxiii. 11: 'And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer; for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.' Yet this vision of the Christ was rigidly assigned to its true category, a feat possible only to an analytic mind of the first order. It was once only that the risen Christ appeared to him in His glorified resurrection body, and commissioned him henceforth to be an Apostle and a witness to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

2. This manifestation of Jesus to Paul had precisely the same effect upon his faith and life as the other appearances had upon the other disciples.

Paul made the bodily resurrection of Jesus a fundamental element in his teaching. The essential similarity of the manifestations comes here dramatically to view. Peter and John and the others saw their risen Lord, and immediately went forth with the greatest boldness to proclaim His resurrection from the dead as the central manifestation of His power and glory. Paul saw Jesus on the way to Damascus, and he also went forth to preach his message of the Resurrection. In each case conviction was absolute. So convincing to Paul was the evidence that he held his character for truthfulness to be bound up with it. It was so absolutely certain that he was willing and ready to

be branded as a false witness if Christ had not been raised from the dead.

This vision of the risen Christ captured his whole life even as it had captured the lives of the other disciples. We know with what power and love they devoted themselves to their Lord after His Resurrection. A new heroism immediately leaped into their lives, which can be explained only by their certain knowledge of the living Christ. The same zeal is seen in the case of Paul. Up to the hour of the vision he was a persecutor and blasphemer, from the hour of the manifestation all in all for Jesus Christ. It was henceforth his life to know Christ and the power of His Resurrection. We can understand these things only if these men, one and all, looked upon the risen Christ. Otherwise they are a mystery which no ingenuity can explain.

3. St Paul speaks of the life of the Christian as a resurrection life. And this is the life we all must live if we are to witness, like the Apostle, to the reality of our faith in a risen Lord.

When the love of Christ enters the heart it revolutionizes the life. Dr Chalmers coined a memorable phrase when he talked about the 'expulsive power of a new affection.' When the love of Christ enters the heart, it drives out the love of wealth, the love of pleasure, the love of the world; it expels from the heart all base, sordid, and sinful affections, so that the man who once set his affection on things on the earth now sets his affection on things above. Whenever that deep-seated, central alteration takes place in a man's life, it is no exaggeration to call it a resurrection. When Zacchæus, the chief publican, became open-handed and generous; when the woman who was a sinner became one of the saints; when Francis, the Beau Brummell of Assisi, became Francis the great gospel preacher of his age; when John Newton, the blaspheming, slave-dealing sea-captain, became John Newton the great evangelical preacher—the change that took place in these men amounted to nothing less than a resurrection. They rose into newness of life. And though the change in others is not so obvious and startling, yet whenever Christ does enter the heart there is such an alteration of aims, standards, ambitions, ideals, motives, that resurrection is the best word to describe the change. The life that was once centred in self becomes henceforth centred in God.

¶ Mr Gladstone's character, as Lord Morley's biography brings out well, was in one respect exceedingly simple. His life became immensely powerful and influential: but it all flowed from one source—the moral crisis, almost in the form of a religious 'awakening' or 'conversion,' through which he passed in his Oxford days. For immediately upon this there followed the consecration of his whole life as the life of a layman, and yet to be lived from the highest motives. Up to the age of twenty-two, Gladstone was like a hundred other lads around him. From that age till he died at eighty-nine he lived in the lavish expenditure of power generated in him by one year—perhaps one hour—of conviction.[1]

¶ As Christ died, so must we die. Wilberforce died to fashion that he might live unto humanity; Ruskin died to gold that he might live to beauty; Darwin died to society that he might live to science; and every man's higher life begins in a death.[2]

Many of us bear the Christian name, but are we living the risen life? Have we died to self and risen into newness of life, or is this the deplorable fact, that we still live the old self-life, and our affections are still set upon things on the earth? We are not witnesses of the Resurrection as the Apostles were. And is not that the reason why Christianity makes such slow progress? The world would soon be converted if we were all truly 'risen with Christ,' if we all lived the new life, the Easter life of love and sacrifice, the life in which God is King and His will is law.

Let me hate mine own life,
That I led in evil ways—
Envy, lying, lust, and strife,
Selfish nights and careless days.

Mine own life—I knew not
It was death; but now 'tis meet
It were buried, hid, forgot—
Christ, I lay it at Thy feet.

[1] A. Taylor Innes, *Chapters of Reminiscence*, 172.
[2] W. L. Watkinson, *The Bane and the Antidote*, 111.

God's Grace to Paul

1 Cor. xv. 10.—'But by the grace of God I am what I am.'

HERE is a description of a man, and nothing apparently could be more vague or less definite than the words 'I am what I am.' Yet, vague and indefinite and, at first sight, unsatisfactory as they are, one cannot help feeling that there is a ring of reality, of actuality, a sense of power about them; they describe a being, not a nonentity. There is something in them that stands up and says to all the world—This was a man!

There is something in the form of the expression that at once recalls, and at the same time makes us afraid to say it recalls, that unspeakably awful description of God by Himself: 'And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say unto me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM.' These wonderful words tell us much: they proclaim the incomprehensibility of God, His infinite greatness; but they proclaim, as with the great and solemn beats of a chime that is meant to strike the ear and heart of every creature in the universe, first and foremost of all, the Being of God—God *is*. He is a living and true God.

And so they, whose God Jehovah is, become *like Him*. They share His being. They *live*. To know God is everlasting life, and hence a saint can humbly appropriate in his own measure these words. God says, I am That I am; and the believer can say with grateful and adoring amazement, And by the grace of God *I* am what I am.

¶ 'You don't know what I've been,' said the great Rabbi Duncan to Principal Brown, of Aberdeen—'You don't know what I've been, but I will tell you. To such a depth of scepticism had I sunk that, one day, on seeing a horse passing, I said to myself, There is no difference between that horse and me.' 'Very well,' said his friend to him; 'but the question is—Where are you now?' 'Well,' he replied, 'it was a Dr Mearns that brought me out of that atheism, and from that time forward I have never doubted the existence of a personal God.'[1]

How did St Paul become the man he was? 'By the grace of God,' he says. The essential meaning of grace is love, but it is love with a certain meaning—the love of the Highest for the lowest, the love of God for man.

1. We see clearly that grace is active and energizing. Grace had made the Apostle what he was. We need to have enlarged ideas of the power that resides in those forces which are immaterial and spiritual. As a matter of fact, mere mechanical forces are insignificant from the standpoint of power and influence compared with the intellectual and spiritual. Take the one illustration of thought. What do you say of thought? Do you reduce it to a mere movement of the physical substance of the brain? Do you say it is like the flitting of a shadow—here and then gone, leaving no trace of itself behind? Why, a thought is a living creature, as Luther would say, having eyes and teeth. Let it out, it will pass from mind to mind and life to life, moulding, shaping, guiding them, and you can set no bounds to its influence. But the greatest energy of all is 'grace.' That is a truth about 'grace' we need more clearly to realize. It is not a mere sentiment, it is not an amiability—it is a force, a power, an energy.

Take a reference or two in illustration. 'Be strengthened,' writes Paul to Timothy, 'in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.' 'Strengthened in the grace'—grace is the fountain of power and might; the secret of triumph over cowardice and fear. 'Be not carried away by divers and strange teachings, for it is good that the heart be stablished by grace,' writes the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. 'Be not carried away,' he says; these Hebrew Christians were being driven backwards and forwards by changing tides of opinion, they were like the surge of the sea—there was neither steadiness nor stability about their lives. And how was this instability of theirs to be counteracted and remedied? By 'grace.' It was 'grace' that would stablish the heart, and enable them to stand four-square to all the winds that blew. 'God is able to make all grace abound unto you,' writes Paul to the Corinthians, 'that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work.' 'God is

[1] J. P. Struthers, *Windows in Heaven*, 71.

able to make all grace abound unto you.' What then? 'That ye may abound unto every good work.' Abounding grace—abounding work! Power for anything and everything!

¶ 'Grace, 'tis a charming sound,' says one of our hymns. Yes, there is something beautiful and winsome about the very word 'grace.' But I never think of that line without feeling its absurd inadequacy! Grace—a 'charming sound'! Why, it would be just as appropriate to say that Niagara was 'a charming sound'! What is the dominant impression Niagara makes as it hurries along, seething, swirling, roaring to its final leap over the rocks? That of power — resistless, boundless, incalculable power! There is power in Niagara to do the work of a continent well-nigh! Ask the people of Buffalo, that great town twenty miles or so away, what Niagara is to them. And they will answer you—power. It is Niagara that runs their cars; it is Niagara that drives their machinery; it is Niagara that lights their streets. Niagara, chained, harnessed, put to use, is doing the work of Buffalo. And 'grace' is a perfect Niagara of power! 'Charming sound,' indeed! It is a resistless tide of energy, it is a sweeping flood of force! That is the representation of grace given to us in the New Testament![1]

2. 'By the grace of God, I am what I am.' Well, what was he? A Christian Apostle. Paul never ceased to wonder at the marvel of his apostleship. Paul was 'lost in wonder, love and praise' when he thought of his apostleship. For of all men he seemed the least worthy of this high honour and dignity. 'For I am . . . not meet to be called an apostle,' he writes, 'because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am.' It was God's grace that had lifted him up to that height and conferred upon him that honour.

To be an Apostle meant that one had seen God manifest in flesh and raised up in glory. It meant that one was a witness of the Resurrection. It meant being one of the foundation-stones on which the Kingdom of Christ was to be built. And Paul's special work involved all this.

And what a successful worker this Apostle became. Never surely did any man toil as he did. He travelled innumerable miles; he preached innumerable sermons; he suffered unspeakable hardships. As the result of his unwearied labour he dotted all the lands between Antioch and Rome with Christian churches. He was called into the service last of all the Apostles—as one indeed born out of due time. But so earnestly, so unsparingly, with such consuming zeal did he fling himself into the service, that he can speak as having laboured 'more abundantly than they all.' And then he at once corrects himself. He knows that his vast toil, and the success he met with, were not to be put to his own credit, but were the result of the Divine love aiding him and strengthening him.

¶ 'God,' says Adolphe Monod, 'left to the Jews the first twelve Apostles, and gave to the Gentiles one only, whom He prepared expressly for them. Like a spiritual Atlas, Paul carries the whole heathen world upon his shoulders. That Roman Empire, the most powerful on the face of the earth, which required seven ages to be established, he took only a quarter of an age to regenerate. The greatest among men was Jesus Christ; the greatest among apostles was Paul.'

3. It is grace that makes successful workers still. Apart from the Divine help we are utterly and entirely impotent. 'If God be for us,' said Paul exultingly, 'who can be against us?' Men have attempted what looked like impossible tasks with very scanty material resources, but the grace which was bestowed upon them was not found vain. Carey went to India, with a Church at home indifferent to missions, and a government in India opposed to his coming. It seemed a mad enterprise, but the 'grace' was not found vain. Mackay did the same in Uganda, and Lawes and Chalmers went to the savages of New Guinea. It seemed a hopeless undertaking to christianize New Guinea. 'I have seen myself,' said Dr Lawes, 'six murderers and cannibals live peaceful lives. I have seen shameless thieves and robbers become honest. I have seen the lascivious and filthy become pure. I have seen the quarrelsome and selfish become unselfish and kind'—the 'grace' was not found vain.

This same grace which redeems, and calls, and strengthens, also keeps. Paul had his share of temptation and difficulty and trial in the Christian life. Many of those associated

[1] J. D. Jones.

with him found the life too hard and turned back. But Paul never faltered. He bore up against deprivation and suffering and loss. He tells of one of his trials—a thorn in the flesh, he called it. He besought the Lord thrice to take it away. But God's reply was, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' And what 'grace' did in the case of that particular trial it did in the case of all the trials and temptations that beset him, so that at the end he could say, 'I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.'

What was sufficient for the Apostle is sufficient for us. The forces of the world all tend to drive a man into sin and shame. But here is another force that is stronger than the pressure of the world, and which will keep a man pressing towards the highest and the best. A boat left to itself will naturally float with the current. If you want to drive it up the river you must have within the boat some force stronger than the force of the current—such as the force of steam. To breast the stream we need some force within us stronger than the world without us, and that stronger force we have in the 'grace of God.'

Grace taught my wand'ring feet
To tread the heavenly road;
And new supplies each hour I meet,
While pressing on to God.

Grace all the work shall crown,
Through everlasting days;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise.[1]

The Sin of Self-Satisfaction

1 Cor. xv. 10.—'By the grace of God I am what I am.'
Luke xviii. 11.—'God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are.'

In both these texts we have a Pharisee giving an account of himself.

Before his conversion to Christianity St Paul had lived as a Pharisee according to the straitest sect of their religion. He had had the same training and lived in the same religious circle as the Pharisee of the Gospel story. We cannot fancy St Paul, even in that period of his life, standing and thanking God that he was not as other men are, though he tells us himself that he was at that time blameless so far as legal Pharisaic righteousness went. But no sooner had he acknowledged Christ for his Master than he ceased to consider himself blameless. From that time forward his pride and bigotry give place to a humility which grew ever deeper to the end of his life. Three times at different dates he gives us his estimate of himself. The first, in this Epistle, is: 'I am not meet to be called an apostle'; the second, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, is: 'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given'; the third, in the Epistle to Timothy, is: 'Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' The lowest estimate seems to be the latest.

Let us now turn to the other Pharisee, who went up into the Temple to pray. He posts himself in his accustomed station, where other worshippers expect to see him, and proceeds to thank God that he is an eminently respectable person. And so he is, judged by any ordinary standard; he is honourable and just in business matters, scrupulously regular in his religious duties, and extremely generous with his money. Why did he go back to his house not justified, without a blessing on his prayer?

The fault of the Pharisee was not exactly pride, but rather self-satisfaction. The word does not perhaps seem to us to convey a very serious charge. There are many worse faults than that, we may say. Perhaps there are, but it would be hardly too much to say that our Lord seems to have regarded self-satisfaction as the most dangerous state into which a man can fall. It is not that self-satisfaction is a greater sin than extortion, or injustice, or adultery; it is that self-satisfaction is an absolute bar to future progress. The self-satisfied man cannot learn anything. Our Lord found that there was one class, and one only, on whom His teaching and example were thrown away. This was not the criminal class, nor even the covetous, money-making class; Zacchæus and Matthew, the publicans, obeyed His call. No, it was the pre-eminently religious class, those from whom most might have been expected: they alone learned nothing, because they thought they had nothing to learn. The publicans and the outcasts went into the Kingdom of Heaven before the priests, the lawyers, and the Pharisees, because the former

[1] P. Doddridge.

were capable of repentance, of gratitude, and of love, while the latter trusted in themselves, thought they were righteous, and despised others, including the Son of God, who was come to save them.

¶ George Eliot gives us a picture of a self-satisfied Pharisee in Mrs Patten, one of the parishioners of the Rev. Amos Barton. 'When Mr Barton comes to see me,' she says to her tea-table companions, 'he talks about nothing but my sins and my need o' marcy. Now, Mr Hackit, I've never been a sinner. From the first beginning, when I went into service, I al'ys did my duty by my emplyers. I was a good wife as any in the country — never aggravated my husband. The cheese-factor used to say my cheese was al'ys to be depended on. I've known women, as their cheeses swelled a shame to be seen, when their husbands had counted on the cheese-money to make up their rent; and yet they'd three gowns to my one. If I'm not to be saved, I know a many as are in a bad way.' [1]

1. The pages of history and our own observation may teach us the same lesson. It is self-satisfaction that everywhere stops progress: the two cannot exist together. A man comes into the world with great gifts. At first he makes good use of them. This is the time when, as a rule, he does his best work, just before the world discovers him. After he has succeeded, we too often trace a lamentable falling-off. There is no further real advance in the man himself. He is now satisfied with himself, and forthwith the vision once so keen becomes faint, the ready hand loses its cunning, the sure feet stumble; well if the conscience, too, does not become blunted and if the man does not become a humbug and a hypocrite. Even in the affairs of this world the man who counts himself to have apprehended has shot his bolt; there will be nothing more of interest to say about him.

¶ We recall the well-known story of the great Danish sculptor, Thorwaldsen. A friend found him depressed, and asked the reason. He replied: 'My genius is decaying. Here is my statue of Christ, which is the first of my works which has satisfied me. Hitherto, I have never come near the idea in my mind. I shall have no more great thoughts.'

[1] *Scenes of Clerical Life.*

2. In the life of the soul this law holds even more strongly, because here self-satisfaction is more observed, it has more force, and is more dangerous in the inner than in the outer life. If we aim at some worthy object we may gain it and feel some satisfaction; but if there is any man who can go into God's house and say, 'God, I thank thee that I am what Thou seest me to be,' he must know very little either of God or of his own heart. How different is the language of God's saints when they feel themselves to be standing in the presence of their Maker. When Isaiah saw his wondrous vision he cried, 'Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips . . . for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.' When St Peter saw the wonder of the Lake of Gennesaret, he cried, 'Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' In all parts of the Bible we have the fear of the Lord spoken of as the proper attitude of man; and we are now told that we need not be afraid at all.

They love Thee little, if at all,
Who do not fear Thee much.
If love is Thine attraction, Lord,
Fear is Thy very touch.[1]

3. Self-satisfaction may be the result of putting our achievements too high or of setting our standard too low. The second is more common than the first. Christianity is a heroic religion, and we are satisfied if our career can be summed up in the words which we see sometimes on old tombstones: 'He lived respected and died lamented.' St Paul, however, had a very different standard, not only for himself, but for all his comrades, 'Till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' We must understand these words in a sense which makes them reasonable, because God demands nothing of us which He will not enable us to perform. A Divine command is always a promise of help. Perfection in a human being is not absolute but relative. It is the fulfilment of that kind and that degree of excellence which each of us was meant to exhibit. But in a sense the standard is absolute, is one which we can never

[1] F. W. Faber.

suppose for a moment we have reached. Those who have scoffed at Christian humility as a starveling, nerveless virtue, unfitting us to take a manly and active part in life, have totally misunderstood its nature.

We can see from St Paul's language about himself how far humility is from self-contempt. Pride and self-contempt are alike in this, that they forbid any attempt at improvement. They are alike in this also, that they blind us to reality. The proud man cannot see things as they are, because he is always standing in his own light. Self-contempt prevents us from seeking and cheerfully undertaking the work which God means us to do. True humility is not hopeless, because, although we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves, our sufficiency is of God. The foundation of St Paul's glorifying and of his self-abasement alike is the conviction that he is a chosen instrument in the hands of God, a weak and imperfect instrument used by the Master's hand to accomplish the Master's work. He feels pride and thankfulness in being thus used. He knows that he does not furnish the force and the skill which guide him at times; he knows that he is a fellow-worker with God—the most glorious and inspiring thought that animates a human heart.

¶ On thinking over our long association, it becomes clear to me that Whyte's main characteristic was his intense humility. This was never a base humility. It never passed into a painful and haunting sense of inferiority. That feeling is the ruin of true humility, and Whyte, who was in all ways a just and faithful knight of God, had none of it. What a gift he was to his Church, to his nation! How wide were the irradiations of faith and love and hope and repentance that came from his intense and prayerful life. And he died as we should have wished him to die, literally, he fell asleep in Jesus.[1]

To religious people the danger of self-satisfaction and the false security which it brings often comes in the guise of passive reliance on the means of grace and contentment with the observance of rules and traditions of the elders. This was the special danger of Pharisaism—and we have many Pharisees among us still. The gospel of Christ tears up this false confidence by the root. But now, as then, it is very difficult to convince the Pharisee that God will not be satisfied with his 'All these things have I kept from my youth up.'

[1] W. Robertson Nicoll.

Grace that Goes for Nothing

1 Cor. xv. 10.—'His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain.'

'The grace he showed me did not go for nothing.'—(Moffatt.)

One of our poets has said that 'many a flower is born to blush unseen, and waste its sweetness on the desert air.' We have all felt that. We invade remote hills and moorland places that are seldom visited by man, to find them lavishly adorned with beauty—beauty of flower, of rock and stream and airy sunshine; and we feel that it is a prolific waste, an abundance of loveliness that 'goes for nothing.' We are wrong, partly through conceit; because, although it may be, as Dean Inge has said, that 'the Beauty of the world is the strongest evidence we have of the goodness and benevolence of the Creator,' it is merely conceit on our part to imagine that those high gardens are infertile of purpose unless hedged by our attention. Again, we are wrong through ignorance, as a little insight and reflection will make plain. Every speck of life in all that wilderness is responding to all the grace of a bountiful God. Fishes and birds and flies, and all the creatures of air and hill and stream, are living out their being in all its fullness. What we call the silence of the moorland is in reality so high a chorus of vitality and gratitude that it escapes our dull and prepossessed attention.

If there is any place wherein the bountiful beauty and love, the grace of God, goes for nothing, it is not in the fields, or on the hills, or on the unvisited moors, or in the depths of the sea! There is only one place wherein the grace of God goes for nothing, and that is in the hearts of men and women. Everywhere else every living thing goes forth in the full measure of its being to the bountiful grace of God.

Let us reflect upon this tragic circumstance; and for this purpose take a few illustrations from the lives of men and women like ourselves of the sterility that befalls the lavish grace of God towards them.

1. Take illness and our recovery from it. Those of us who have undergone a severe ill-

ness know the alarm, or, at least, the uncertainty with which the experience affected us. We can recall the unbounded gratitude which filled us when danger passed and new health like a new dawn came over us, body and spirit.

¶ Gray has described this joy in well-known lines—

> See the wretch that long has tost
> On the thorny bed of pain,
> At length repair his vigour lost
> And breathe and walk again;
> The meanest flowret of the vale,
> The simplest note that swells the gale,
> The common sun, the air, the skies,
> To him are opening Paradise.

We can recall the simplification of our life which we envisaged as we waited and waxed strong, the pure vows and the holy resolves we made. We tasted then in our souls a grace of restoration and revival throughout us in which we saw God. When we pass back to the world again, does it never happen that the visions we saw and the vows we made in that cloister of our sickness falter and fade, and that the grace of God has gone for very little? Benjamin Jowett says that 'the memory of some illnesses has been, in the mind of the sufferers, the best recollection of their lives, the image of Christ crucified brought home to them, to which they have turned again and again in times of sorrow and temptation.' That is a lofty view to take of it. But something like that should go on with us for ever in our lives, from the remembrance of God's grace in illness. Whittier, during one of his serious illnesses, wrote these words: 'I think sickness has a wonderful effect in fanning into life the half-extinguished conscience.' This is true; but our conscience, thus fanned into white fire at such time, should be a light thereafter in our life.

2. Take now a second illustration of the sterility we let come on the grace of God. Many men and women in their youthful days have committed some stupid, wayward, or sinful folly, of which it is said on all hands that retribution and disability inevitably pursue it. But they escaped! Their escape amazed them. It seemed to them like a miracle. It was a miracle. It was due to the wonderful, forgiving, revitalizing patience, mercy, and grace of God. Clearly or dimly they themselves recognize that. Some of them never forget it: the grace is permitted to work its full work from that day onwards. But there are others who say secretly to themselves, 'All that the preachers and other alarmists among the elder people said of the danger and destructiveness of these things is wildly exaggerated. Here and there I may return to do as I did!' And, behold, the judgment falls! The reason of the calamity is simply that the grace which has been allowed to go for nothing becomes sterile and afterwards fails.

3. There are several other instances one might mention of the bountiful grace of God that many allow to go for nothing. That holy book the Bible is such an instance. The Bible is at our hand every day of our life, the veritable treasury of the incarnate grace of God. This is the book of which the most daring and untrammelled thinker of a hundred years ago said, 'He that has lost God can find Him again in this book, and towards him who has never known Him it wafts the breath of the Divine Word.'

¶ William Canton in his book *Yesterday, To-day and For Ever* tells us of a Jew in Turkish Arabia who had bought a copy of the Epistle to the Hebrews and who came to a colporteur to obtain the New Testament. 'That is the *Injil*,' said another Jew who was standing near, 'and the *Injil* is a forbidden book for you.' 'I tasted the food,' was the quiet reply, 'and now I come to the table.'

So, too, there is the living presence of the Spirit of Christ—Christ by us, Christ waiting at the very door of our heart, longing to fill our loneliness with Himself, our weakness with His own strength, our tempted lives with the power of a Divine resistance; and yet how many let all this grace go for nothing, for want of a single gesture and breath of prayer.

And there is the tangible provision of grace that is provided for us in the Blessed Sacrament. Here do we feed upon the bread of God, and drink the royal wine of heaven, tasting afresh the calm of sin forgiven. And yet, how many are negligent of this ineffable grace, and let it go for nothing.

4. As a last instance, take the wonderful grace God lavishes upon us in our family

life. Homes such as ours are almost supernatural channels of the love and sweetness of God's grace—and this without calling up any idealized image of them in our minds. Let us think of the average home, with all its defects of temper and disposition, all its transient bickerings and glooms, 'when tempers are short in the morning,' or at any other time. Let it be that such homes have been baptized into the religion of our fathers: we have only to set them in the perspective which a survey of the homes of man in times past and still in pagan quarters affords, to realize indeed that they are well-nigh supernatural channels of the love of God. And yet are there no instances of such a home being taken so carelessly for granted, so forgetfully, so negligently, that this grace of God which wells and flows in it goes for next to nothing? Are there no sons and daughters who so regard and treat their home, not realizing that a day may come when, looking back to a hearth and a family circle that are no more, they will be visited by a gnawing sense of a grace of God in life which so foolishly they allowed to run to waste? Are there no husbands and wives who, as the years pass by, come to treat the bountiful grace of God which their home enshrines as a forgotten thing? In their early married life their home thrilled with it. Their home can be like that to the very end, matured indeed, and mellowed as in an afternoon sunshine. The sunshine of afternoon is the loveliest light of all; and the afternoon years of two lives that were wedded in the morning by God's grace should be at their fullest then, with a love that is chivalrous, thoughtful, kind, uttered and fulfilled.

¶ The first kiss of the youth and the maiden—he in the glory of his strength and she in the glory of her beauty—is the very blossom of life, the inspiration of the poet, and makes the round world laugh with joy.

But the kiss of man and wife, in the dusty afternoon of life, when the transport and illusion of youth are dead, after long years of disappointment, struggle, and hope grown tired in the stress and strain of daily living—the kiss of these two, pausing for a moment and turning to each other in faithful love, while the road stretches out before them, pale and misty, into the silence of the great unknown land—telling, as it does, of vanquished temptation and patient endurance, may well fill heaven itself and the clear-eyed passionless angels with a solemn gladness.[1]

There is no love like the old love, that we
courted in our pride;
Though our leaves are falling, falling, and
we're fading side by side,
There are blossoms all around us with the
colours of our dawn,
And we live in borrowed sunshine when the
day-star is withdrawn.[2]

These are a few instances of things which we men and women allow so often to go for nothing. Let us examine ourselves and see if this ingratitude is ours. And if it be so, let us seek in humility to remember and cherish the grace of God.

Immortality

1 Cor. xv. 12.—'How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?'

As we read the letters of St Paul we get some idea of what Christ meant to the Apostle—of the rapture and riches He gave to his life, and the glory of the struggle as he followed his Lord. But what thrilled and upheld him most of all was his sureness of immortality. How his heart exulted at the thought of that vast unthinkable inheritance with which Christ has endowed us. For what a colossal difference it makes! There are poor souls with hearts as tender and sensitive as our own, and for them there is nothing beyond the horizons of this cramped and narrow present. For them this is all—this tiny islet of a life which the ruthless waves of time keep tearing down so swiftly and remorselessly. Their deepest affections are only transient shadows, passing ripples on the waters, seen and gone; and when their dear ones leave them, it is a final separation without any ray of hope; all that they knew and loved has crumbled into nothingness. The 'blank stare of the grave' ends everything, and there is nothing on the farther side.

No motion has she now, no force
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

A dead thing among things as dead.

[1] Lucas Malet. [2] Oliver Wendell Holmes.

But we know that we are encompassed by an everlasting loving-kindness that will never cease. Death is blotted out. And if sore hearts sitting in lonesome places, with hands feeling for what they used to have, cry out that it is still a grim and dreadful reality, which pretty words cannot explain away, Paul answers: But that is not death—that passing at a step from one bright and sunny room into another even sunnier and brighter. You never tasted the real bitterness of it all, you who can face it knowing that you are as imperishable as the Eternal God Himself; you who know that your dear ones are as real as ever, not gone out like a light suddenly extinguished that leaves only a blank, empty, silent blackness; you who can hear blown back to you from the other world that shout of happy voices that your hearts remember, giving thanks and praise for the grace that was sufficient, and the strength that proved enough.

¶ 'This is not the end of me,' said Campbell-Bannerman on his death-bed, when his colleague rose to go; 'we shall meet again, Asquith.'

If it be true! There are still those who say 'there is no resurrection of the dead.' How does the gospel prove and make certain this glorious thing?

1. To begin with, by *its sense of the bigness of man*, of every one. What a tremendous conception it has of a human life—how staggering, how awesome! Long, long ago, at the beginning of beginningless eternity, God was struck by a thought that fascinated Him, so that He said, 'I will create this, I will make it real.' And for interminable ages He was content to plan, to prepare, to toil for that. 'Immense,' says Whitman, 'have been the preparations for me. Faithful and true the hands that have helped me. Cycles have ferried my cradle, rowing and rowing like cheerful boatmen.' And at long length we came, God's thought embodied, His dream worked out at last! And is this all that is to come of it, these brief seventy years, and half of them mere sleeping? Does God tire so quickly of His majestic creations and wipe out what He has finished, and forthwith draw something else on the blank space, with never a further thought of what went before?

Sometimes that seems likely enough for ourselves. We are so drab, so prosaic, so unimpressive, we feel there is no special necessity for our continuance, and sometimes we would be content to be out of it all. Yet have we never felt what Browning felt: 'Know this earth is not my sphere. For I cannot so narrow me but that I still exceed it'? Have we never felt that there are prophecies and indications in us of something beyond; that there is more in us than can find expression here; that we are bigger than this life, larger than time; that, if this be all, then we have been fashioned ridiculously out of proportion to our environment?

¶ This is how Cowper once ended a letter to his cousin, Lady Hesketh, 'There is not room enough for friendship to unfold itself in full bloom in such a nook of life as this. Therefore I am, and must, and will be, yours for ever, William Cowper.'

¶ For half a century I have been writing my thoughts, in prose, verse, history, philosophy, drama, romance, tradition, satire, ode, song. I have tried all, but I feel that I have not said the thousandth part of what is in me. When I go down to my grave, I can say I have finished my day's work, but I cannot say that I have finished my life. My day's work will begin again the next morning. The tomb is not a blind alley, it is a thoroughfare. It closes in twilight to open in dawn. I feel in myself the future life. I am like a forest which has been more than once cut down. The earth gives me its generous sap, but heaven lights me with the reflection of unknown worlds. You may say the soul is nothing but the resultant of bodily powers. But why, then, is my soul more luminous when my body begins to fail? Why, when winter is on my head, is eternal spring in my heart? The nearer I approach death, the clearer I hear around me the immortal symphonies of the world about me. My work is only beginning. My thirst for the infinite proves infinity.[1]

When the Lord Christ died, those who loved and knew Him could not picture Him as dead. After the first stunning, sickening shock the thing just would not grip their minds. Surely those kind hands must somewhere still be leaping out in eager helpfulness for all hurt things; and surely that unselfish heart must still be carrying other people's burdens as it

[1] Victor Hugo.

always had done. It seemed to them no wild crazy tale that He was alive. Nature loses nothing, uses every atom jealously, over and over and over again. And that vast mass of love and kindness and unselfishness, which all His prodigal expenditure of it had, they felt, in no way exhausted—was all that just thrown away? Thirty years! It would take a whole eternity for that royal nature to express itself.

And we have known people so big, so loving, so richly endowed, gifted with so generous an equipment at God's hands, that all they do seems only a preface, a first chapter, a beginning. Marcus Dods argues that we are only children in the nursery; and that as this child, grasping and peevish about his card houses, will be selfish and ill-tempered out in the real world; and this other, brave and good-natured over a childish trouble, will face the ills of grown life uncomplainingly; so these little ploys of ours, which seem so big to us, are at least a sufficient test of us and make clear who of us can be safely trusted to be set, no longer to transient things which can be rubbed out again, but to the eternal realities, which can never pass away. We shall grow up; shall pass out into the real world—

> And, doubtless, unto thee is given
> A life that bears immortal fruit
> In those great offices that suit
> The full-grown energies of heaven.

Man is too big for this to be all; it takes a whole eternity to justify the scale and plan on which he has been fashioned.

2. Another proof of the Resurrection that the gospel gives us is that *we are being trained for something*. Here is this difficult life of ours, with its pain, its trials, its temptations, and the like. And what is to be made of it? Given that axiom of the faith that it is all a discipline, an education, deftly chosen to produce in us that which will make us serviceable to God and our fellows, then it becomes intelligible; and even when the winds are howling round us, catching away our breath, and leaving us cold and shivery, we can see that it is right and kind and wise; can trust where we don't understand.

But if this life be all, how difficult it becomes, how the baffled heart cries out in sheer bewilderment and agony, Why! A mind prepares itself through long, strenuous, laborious years, is ready for some high achievement, and then, sudden as a shot bird, it is struck down. Was all the preparation wasted? Or a man slowly and with pain, through God's guidance and help, fashions his character into a clean, strong, beautiful thing, and just as it is nearing perfection, he is swept out. Is experience only a mocking voice that tells us too late what we should have done, with no practical value in it—as the man in Browning's poem looks back on life and sees it all—and knows now how the game should have been played—too late—for he is dying? Are we set to learn how life ought to be lived? And, having learned it, are we given no chance to put it into action? 'Experience,' wrote Horace Walpole to Hannah More, 'reverses its utility by coming at the wrong end of our life, when we do not want it.' But does it? It is so obvious that we are being trained for something. And does that something never come? Surely Bishop Butler was right when he argued that this life is a first volume, which demands another to explain and complete it.

3. But our Lord comes to the problem, mainly from a different angle.

Browning, in a passionate passage, cries out fiercely—

> If this be all—
> And other life awaits us not—for one
> I say 'tis a poor cheat, a stupid bungle,
> A wretched failure. I, for one, protest
> Against it, and I hurl it back with scorn.[1]

That is not a true reading of this glorious life of ours. For how astounding it is *that we are here at all!* Ignatius Loyola sat down once to reckon up God's gifts to him, and got no further than the first, 'Myself'—sat there lost in wonder as it stared up at him. How high God has set us in the scale of being, and how wonderful is this life, teeming with rich interests He has thought out for us! And shall we fling this amazing thing down at His feet, as not worth having? And yet Christ agrees with him, and bids us remember that God's love is an eternal love, His faithfulness an everlasting faithfulness. 'I am the God of Abraham, and

[1] *Paracelsus.*

of Isaac, and of Jacob'; 'God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' How then can we say that there is no resurrection of the dead? Can even we forget? A little one is taken, and the full years come and go. And there are other little voices in one's ears, and other little feet upon the floor. And yet always the mother's heart remembers and is not quite satisfied. And God! Does He love us the little moment we are here, and then the others take our places? No, cries Christ, and there is almost anger in His tones! 'As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' 'Would it not be blasphemy,' reflected Wordsworth in his day of sorrow, 'to say we have more of love in our nature than He has? The thought is monstrous; and yet how to get rid of it except upon the supposition of another and a better world, I do not see.' Do you imagine this is all that God can do for us—this that is accomplished before we die? We give ourselves to Him, and even here it is a glory that whoso has tasted would not renounce for the whole world. Yet is it not largely a dream unattained, a yearning unsatisfied? Must not our dreams come true at last, and we be all that God Himself has taught our souls to yearn to be? Or else is not our conception of a worthy life bigger than God's, and our dreams nobler and finer and higher than His realities? It takes a whole eternity for God's love toward us to work itself out. Remember, says Christ, that His grace is an everlasting thing that never tires, never runs dry, that even Calvary is only a cupful out of a river brimming and full as ever; and you, too, will be swept out by tremendous currents, with Divine love about you and beneath you and breaking over you, and on all sides of you, far as the eye can reach and infinitely farther—for there is no bound, no shore, no end to this illimitable thing.

Christianity without the Resurrection

1 Cor. xv. 13.—'If there be no resurrection of the dead.'

It is good for us sometimes to face such a supposition as this, and think it out to all its consequences. There are many ways of bringing home truth, and this is one. Suppose what we believe is not true, how would this loss to our faith affect us? The true value of many of our possessions is known only when we are deprived of them. We know what it means to lose health, and the difference it makes to life. We can understand what it means to lose money, and the difference that would make to our comforts or opportunities of doing good. We know what it means to lose a friend, and the loneliness that follows. What would it mean to us if there were no resurrection of the dead? What should we lose?

This is the supposition St Paul places before the Corinthian Church, asking serious attention to it. There were some who were disposed to deny the possibility of the resurrection of the dead. It was displeasing to them, contrary to their habit of thought and to their philosophy. Their Greek taste and science alike condemned it. They thought they were doing no violence to the truth of Christianity when, in reserving to themselves the right of discussing its doctrines, they rejected what did not approve itself to their judgment, and accepted what did.

Paul, however, will not consent to this. He will not for a moment allow that a faith which doubts the resurrection of the dead is a Christian faith at all. He makes Christianity answer with its life for the truth of this great doctrine, which he made the main theme of his preaching. If this be given up, everything goes. Christianity without the resurrection is a dream.

1. If there be no resurrection *Christ is not risen.* This is a startling way of putting it, but Paul would make it plain to the dullest. If you can demonstrate the impossibility of men coming to life after they are dead and buried, then you prove that Christ has not risen. The general truth implies the particular. Christ was a man: He was not proof against crucifixion; if He were put to death, and no dead man ever rises again, then He did not rise. He still sleeps. Paul does not hesitate to number Christ among the human dead. If among our dead none is to rise, no more could Christ have risen. Some one might have said, Yes, it is possible, when we think of it, that Christ may have risen: but then He was

Christ, the sinless, holy one. *He* was raised. But so completely has Christ identified Himself with us that if there is no resurrection of the dead then He did not rise, for He was one of us. Therefore what these Corinthian doubters meant was that Christ still lay in the tomb, and still lies, His dust mingled with the soil of Palestine, the Syrian stars looking down upon His grave.

¶ Richard le Gallienne is not what one would call a Churchman. Indeed, he says some very hard words about Churches and organized Christianity, but, with it all, he has a great and supreme loyalty for Jesus Christ. In his poem, 'The Second Crucifixion,' the mocking mood of the crowd at the Cross is first depicted. Then the multitude turns from the thought of the Cross to the tomb where Jesus was laid. It finds the tomb is not empty. The dead Christ lies there in that silent, sealed tomb.

> No angel now to roll the stone
> From off His unawaking sleep,
> In vain shall Mary watch alone,
> In vain the soldiers vigil keep.

Some day perhaps an explorer may come upon that sealed tomb as Lord Carnarvon came upon the tomb of Tut-ankh-amen. What shall we say to this flippant unbelief? There are many things to say and many arguments to present. It is not easy to dispose of the fact of the Resurrection, and the poet says the very best thing that can be said. He hears men talking of the sealed tomb and the silent Christ, and he replies—

> Yet while they deem my Lord is dead
> My eyes are on His shining head.[1]

2. If there be no resurrection *the preaching of St Paul and his fellow Apostles is vain.* The message they had been proclaiming was a mere fiction, not only 'in vain,' useless, but, as the Greek word signifies, 'without reality,' having, in the most literal sense, nothing in it. The early preaching of the Apostles centred mainly on the fact of Christ having risen. This was the basis of their faith. If any one had asked them why they believed on Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God, they would have said, Because He rose from the dead. After the crucifixion they were in the depths of despair, their mood of mind being well expressed in the regretful words of the two disciples Christ encountered on the way to Emmaus: 'We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.' We trusted, but we no longer hope: that dream is past. When, therefore, by evidence they could not resist, it was proved that Christ had risen from the dead, and their old Master once more stood before them, we see the same men who were dispirited, dejected, disappointed, by the power of the Resurrection transfigured into the heroes who created the Church. Henceforth they were witnesses of the Resurrection. They went forth to say to their fellow countrymen, 'The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom ye slew.' This was to them the Divine verdict in favour of Christ. This was God's answer to the crime of the Jews. It was the proof of the truth He taught, and of the message they preached. If it was not true, their preaching fell to the ground. If they were deceived as to its reality, their teaching had neither basis nor substance. Indeed, if Christ did not rise, he and his fellow Apostles were preaching a falsehood, and the sin was the more heinous that it was a falsehood concerning God. They were proclaiming that He had done something which He had not done. Would you make us out, Paul says, 'false witnesses of God'? The words indicate the sacredness of the Apostles' testimony. If there were any one truth on which they staked their credit as God's messengers, and as honest men, it was the truth that Christ had risen; and if it was not true, their preaching was vain; they were convicted as false witnesses, deceived themselves and deceiving others with what had no solid foundation.

3. If there be no resurrection *the faith of Christian believers is in vain.* Not only, says Paul, is our preaching vain, but your faith is also vain. The three things hang together. Is there, then, nothing left in Christianity if the Resurrection be taken away? Let us ask ourselves what it is we get through our faith in Christ according to the Christian belief. Paul suggests one of the blessings that come to us when he says that if Christ be not risen,

[1] H. T. Kerr, *The Gospel in Modern Poetry*, 29.

our faith is vain: 'ye are yet in your sins.' Remission of sin is one of the best of the gifts of Christ. 'Him,' St Peter said, 'hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.' But if Christ did not rise, did He conquer sin or did sin conquer Him? If He is still in His grave, where is His victory? He fell a victim to sin; the sin of the world slew Him; if He did not recover from the death-blow it gave Him how can He save us from it? Where is our guarantee that He was anything more than one of those noble souls who before and after Him have died martyrs to the truth? St Paul died a martyr. Socrates died a martyr; and thousands before and after sealed their testimonies with their blood. Christ did no more if He did not rise. He *was* no more if He did not rise. It was His Resurrection that proved He was all He claimed to be. It was the seal of God's acceptance of the sacrifice of Himself and the pledge of our redemption. If Christ is not risen, our faith in Him as Redeemer and conqueror of sin is vain.

O God, my heart is satisfied!
My heart is full of praise to Thee—
For in the sinless Lamb, who died—
Himself made sin and death for me—
Who rose, and doth in me abide,
My perfect righteousness I see.[1]

4. If there be no resurrection, *there is no hope of a blessed immortality.* 'They also which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished.' Before Christ came and spoke of the life that is beyond this, the world looked forward to the future with dim, uncertain eyes. Immortality, it is true, they looked for: they did not believe that they would cease to live, but what kind and what quality of life they would have, could only be matter of speculation.

¶ Ruskin, expressing the views of a typical ancient Greek of the highest intellectual type, says: 'And beyond that mortality, what hope have we? Nothing is clear to us on that horizon, nor comforting. Funeral honours; perhaps also rest; perhaps a shadowy life—artless, joyless, loveless. No devices in that darkness of the grave, nor daring, nor delight. Neither marrying nor giving in marriage, nor casting of spears, nor rolling of chariots, nor voice of fame. Lapped in pale Elysian mist, chilling the forgetful heart and feeble frame, shall we waste on for ever? Can the dust of earth claim more of immortality than this? Or shall we have even so much as rest? May we, indeed, lie down again in the dust: or have not our sins hidden from us even the things that belong to that peace? May not chance and the whirl of passion govern us there: when there shall be no thought, nor work, nor wisdom, nor breathing of the soul?'[1]

All this Christ changed. Immortality is no longer a speculation but a certainty. Christ has revealed the unseen, so that the Christian looks forward to it, not with dread but with hope, as to a life that far excels in its joys and occupations the best we can know here. This was the hope to realize which St Paul lived the life he did. He asks his readers to consider in what a pitiable plight he would be if his hope is not well founded. He has given up everything for his faith in Christ. He stands in jeopardy every hour, he dies daily, he has fought with wild beasts at Ephesus—a man who has hazarded his life for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Can they think that all this has had behind it no sustaining recompense, no grand motive?

¶ You remember Mrs Gaskell's Lancashire factory girl: 'I think if this should be the end of all; and if all I have been born for is just to work my heart and life away in this dull place, with those mill-stones in my ears for ever, until I could scream out for them to stop and let me have a little quiet; with my mother gone, and I never able to tell her again how I loved her, and of all my troubles—I think, if this life is the end and there is no God to wipe away all tears from all eyes, I could go mad.'

Paul hoped in Christ. He believed that the future his Master had opened to him was infinitely more desirable than any other possession within reach. He looks to the time when, all his labour over, Christ will welcome him, saying, 'Well done! good and faithful servant'; to the time when mortality shall be swallowed up of life, and the mortal part of him shall put on immortality. But if Christ be only the foremost and the best of all the men who ever lived, that but makes our fate the darker. What do all His beautiful sayings

[1] E. H. Divall, *A Believer's Rest*, 147.

[1] *Modern Painters*, v. 275.

about the Father's House come to, if after all He has not gone to prepare our place, if He is not living now, and so cannot receive us unto Himself? To say that Christ, if He did not rise from the dead, has shed any more light on the future life than men had before He came is the merest trifling with language and with the deepest hopes and anxieties of human souls. Only if He rose can we trust His words to be true, and believe His power to fulfil to be equal to his promise.

It is often said it matters not what a man believes so long as he is sincere, but it will take a great deal to make up for loss of faith in the risen Christ. It is the truth of all truths, and the enduring source of Christian life. Let us confess with Ambrose: 'Thou art the King of Glory: O Christ. Thou art the everlasting Son: of the Father. When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man: Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb. When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death: Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. Thou sittest at the right hand of God: in the Glory of the Father.'

If He, the Christ, went down into the dust of death,
Then is this fragrant first sweet breath
Of spring a lie,
And all this golden world a trust betrayed.
If He could die,
Then all must die;
Love only flames to fade:
There is no promise in the primrose,
No hope in budding trees,
Life is a senseless stream that flows
Into the silent seas
Of nothingness at last.
There is no whence—no whither—and no why,
Thought is the final mockery,
A chance by-product of the brain,
As blank, as purposeless and vain
As all the rest of this mad scheme of things—
Its shining wings
Bear mortals to their death,
As, after witless wandering flight
The moth is burned up in the light,
That, through the darkness, lured him to his doom.
If Jesus died,
Nought but the winter and the gloom
Remain.
But Jesus Lives! Then full and fain,
Shout and sing, ye golden flowers,
Drifting clouds, and dancing showers,
Silver moons that wax and wane,
Resurrexit! Resurrexit!
God's green spring is true again.[1]

The Faith of the Resurrection

1 Cor. xv. 14.—'If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.'

PEOPLE to-day do not like miracles; and yet here, in perhaps the most downright passage which he ever penned, St Paul says that if the miracle of the Resurrection is not true, Christianity is not worth preaching. If Jesus is not the risen and living Christ, our faith is vain. Let us consider this emphatic assertion. What did the great Apostle mean by it?

Now, first of all, St Paul did not base the Christian faith on belief in miracles. In fact, in all the letters of his which have survived he never explicitly mentions any miracle wrought by Jesus, or even any miracles connected with His life except the Resurrection. This silence of his puzzles some good people who do not realize that St Paul, in taking this line, closely followed the example of Jesus Himself. Our Lord, as we read repeatedly in the Gospels, deliberately refused to work miracles to prove that He was the Messiah. He made no attempt to use His powers of healing to convince the Jewish leaders that He was the Son of God. He based His claim to be the Christ on His loyalty to God, or, as we should say, on the power of His teaching and the beauty of His character. 'Never man spake like this man,' said some of those who heard Him tell of His Father in heaven and of the glory of the Kingdom of God. Never man *was* like this man, we may add; and such, in essence, was St Paul's argument for faith in Christ. 'God was in Christ,' he says, 'reconciling the world to himself.' Jesus was for St Paul the perfect man, the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; and rather scornfully he writes: The Jews ask for miracles, the Greeks seek philosophical and scientific knowledge; but we preach Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[1] G. A. Studdert Kennedy, *Lighten our Darkness.*

And as each successive generation of men and women has to engage in life's conflicts, tries and fails to be true to the inner light of conscience, the wonder of the life of Jesus is disclosed anew. As men seek to discover the secret of the universe in which they find themselves, as they puzzle over the great enigma of human life, they find in the words of Jesus strong, simple teaching which can both satisfy and sustain. Never man spake like this man; never man *was* like this man—on these two facts we, with St Paul, base our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

¶ I do not suppose that almost any competent student of Christ's life has any doubt that He was the greatest and best of all the sons of men. There is no need here to multiply testimonies to this by the great and the good. I will quote only that one which seems strangely little known and yet is, perhaps, one of the most striking of them all, the testimony of Kant 'who when his own name was indiscreetly placed by his admirer and future biographer in too near conjunction with that of Christ, . . . speaking of the two names, said, "The One is holy; the other is that of a poor bungler, doing his best to interpret Him."'[1]

1. Why, then, did St Paul insist so strongly on the miracle of the Resurrection? Why did he think it one of the absolutely essential doctrines of Christianity? We may insist that he must have had good reasons. The Apostle was a powerful thinker, though he did not always, in the hurried dictation of his letters, express himself clearly. He did not pretend to disparage the human intellect. A great Christian theologian once said, 'I believe because it is impossible.' This saying is still sometimes quoted—a saying both foolish and wicked. St Paul would have condemned 'knowledge falsely so-called.' The Apostle was always seeking to unite the gospel and the life of Jesus to his own religious insight and experience, and so to arrive at a true, full statement of the Christian faith.

If we carefully read his letters in the order in which they were written, we can see how his thought changed and grew with the working of his ever-active mind. Throughout such growth his belief in the Resurrection never wavered. Jesus of Nazareth, crucified under Pontius Pilate, rose from the dead and became the living Christ—this was the belief that St Paul held to be both certain and of vital importance. For him it was certain because it was well attested. Obviously he had carefully examined the evidence for his belief. We cannot get the first-hand knowledge which St Paul possessed; but what we can say with absolute truth is that from the beginning the Lord's followers believed that they had seen Him after His resurrection. On no other assumption can we explain how the scattered, disheartened disciples so quickly came together again, and with bold and confident enthusiasm preached that Jesus was the Christ whom God had raised from the dead.

2. For us, as for St Paul, the Resurrection is the key to the secret of the universe. It corroborates all that Jesus taught, and demonstrates that His goodness is indestructible. It is the signal example of the great truth that the things of God are eternal with God. The Resurrection is a pledge that human souls, when transformed by qualities which belong to God's nature, put on immortality. It is the confirmation of our instinctive belief that righteousness, mercy, pity, truth, beauty, love, cannot be absolutely destroyed. They may seem to vanish from the earth, but they are everlasting in the world of the spirit. They are the imperishable stuff of the Kingdom of God.

¶ We believe that impermanence is a defect and so that the universe is impugned if it lets worth and dignity pass into everlasting night. If this integrity of the self, so firm in its outlines despite its mutabilities, so hardly and painfully acquired in its noblest instances, were a thing that perished utterly, there would be futility in the best of things that we could not lightly accept. If the world is a vale of soul-making and personality is its most precious harvest, it would be a vale of derision (would it not?) if its greatest achievement were but the flower of a day, not even standing as long as an oak, three hundred years. We believe, indeed, that personality is too fine a thing to be utterly transient, that waste so great and so broad is an unbelievable occurrence, and that a universe which had the power of retaining these excellences would be vain and wicked if it allowed them to disappear.[1]

[1] D. S. Cairns, *The Reasonableness of the Christian Faith*, 147.

[1] John Laird, *The Idea of the Soul.*

Now, these ideas belong to the very core of Christian teaching. They are the good news, revealed by Jesus, confirmed when He rose from the dead. And thus it is that the gospel of Galilee finds completion in the gospel of the Resurrection. We believe that Jesus was God Incarnate; but we must never forget that He was also very Man. He was not some demi-god. He called Himself 'the Son of Man,' meaning thereby that He was tempted as we are, limited by birth, by education, and by opportunity, as all men are limited. But He achieved, as no other man ever achieved, the complete conquest of evil. He gained, as no other man has ever gained, complete union with God. In Him, as man, there was all possible fullness of the qualities of God; and the Resurrection showed, decisively and conclusively, that the perfect human spirit shall live for evermore. The victor over sin was the victor over death.

At his conversion St Paul saw the risen, living Christ. A new direction was then given to his life, new power came into his soul; as he put it, 'God was then pleased to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles.' The Risen Lord, he said, was a life-giving Spirit, the source of faith. To the Apostle faith in Christ was no mere assent to certain truths. It was complete surrender to Christ, a transformation which showed itself in the fruits of the Spirit, in love, joy, peace, longsuffering, patience, meekness, temperance. And the Apostle preached that through such faith in Christ, in the fellowship of His suffering, we too may attain unto the resurrection from the dead, and thus gain eternal life, which is everlasting union with God in Christ. And that great saying of the Apostle, 'In Christ shall all be made alive,' means, surely, that immortality is God's gift to those in whom there has grown some likeness to Christ, something that has so enriched the soul as to give it eternal value in the sight of God.

Is this not a very reasonable faith, reasonable and inspiring; and, moreover, strengthened by all that men have discovered since Jesus Christ lived and died and rose again? Modern science has opened to us wide vistas of the past and the future of humanity, vistas of which St Paul never dreamed. We do not know how the human race will end; but be that end squalid or glorious, in either event humanity must in due time perish from the earth. Will anything then be left of man's struggle to know God and to serve Him? Will mothers' love and heroes' sacrifices then be utterly lost? Will all man's noblest aspirations have been vain? Is there no future for 'unknown warriors' who have fought the good fight of faith? Do they who enlist under the banner of the Cross march to empty victory? Then indeed would our preaching be vain. But in the light of the gospel of the Resurrection we, with St Paul, to all these questions answer, It is not so. In some spiritual realm where Christ lives now men who have been conformed to Christ will be alive for evermore. The Christ-values are indestructible. To know God and to serve Him is to put on immortality.

Why We Believe in Progress

1 Cor. xv. 14.—'If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.'

THESE words have in modern times acquired a controversial flavour, but St Paul did not use them controversially. If any fact in the early history of the Christian movement is certain, it is the fact that belief in the actual occurrence of Christ's resurrection was the main inspiring and sustaining motive of Christian conduct. 'Christ is risen' was the customary salutation with which Christians greeted each other. This was the master belief which dominated their consciousness, and formed the ultimate ground of their common faith and hope. It is hardly too much to say that, apart from this belief, the Christian movement could never have maintained itself against the opposition which it aroused, or succeeded in establishing itself as a permanent and powerful factor in the world's civilized progress.

Can we say that the same condition still holds good? There are modern thinkers and writers who hold that it is no longer possible, or at any rate that it is extremely difficult, to believe that Christ actually burst the bonds of the grave on the third day, that His dead body was actually revitalized then, and transformed into a completely adaptable instrument of His spirit. A wonder story of this kind was credible enough to the child minds of Christ's

contemporaries, but not when placed in the context of twentieth-century scientific thought, and tested by its critical standards. Nor is its acceptance any longer a necessary condition of moral and spiritual progress, man's moral and spiritual nature having now reached a stage of development at which it can afford to dispense with aids which at an earlier stage were useful, if not indispensable. So there is nothing for it but to relegate this beautiful myth to the realm of poetry, its retention among the accredited records of historical happenings being no longer practicable, or indeed possible.

But does the case really stand thus? Is St Paul's declaration really antiquated and out of date, the expression of a point of view and estimate of evidence no longer tenable? These are questions which are exercising the minds of a good many thinking Christians at the present day.

1. What must be said first is this. We must remember that the historical evidence for Christ's resurrection, or its scientific credibility, cannot be considered apart from the question of its practical importance. If it is true that belief in the Resurrection provides a powerful incentive to moral and spiritual progress, this fact cannot but influence our estimate of the evidence for or against its actual occurrence.

¶ A university student once came to see me with a desperate moral problem on his hands. He had started out feeling free to do as he pleased and he now faced the inevitable Nemesis —he was not free to stop. Out of a clear sky came his unexpected ejaculation, 'If I could believe in immortality I think that I could see it through.' He did not mean that he wanted the fires of hell to scare him or a heavenly crown to reward him. He meant that if, sitting there, he was simply a chance collocation of chemical elements, it did not seem to him worth while to face the desperate, sacrificial struggle that moral victory would cost. But if he were an abiding spiritual personality —well what Phidias would not carve more sacrificially at marble than at sandstone?[1]

Put the matter in this way. What would our outlook on life be if, convinced by the arguments of these thinkers, we abandoned our old attitude and adopted theirs? It would be overstating the case to say that it would at once become a hopeless outlook, and that we could no longer believe in the possibility of progress. St Paul declared that he himself and his fellow Christians would be affected thus, that if Christ be not risen his preaching is vain and their faith vain, that if Christ be not risen the only sensible thing to do is to enjoy the passing pleasures of life, since to-morrow they must die. But we cannot fairly describe the attitude of those who deny Christ's bodily resurrection in such terms as these. They indeed claim to be in the very van of progress.

This belief in progress is for the most part instinctive and traditional. Those who hold it do not, as a rule, attempt to analyse it or to defend it by reasoned argument. If we ask them to explain their grounds, their first impulse will be to point to the great advance made in recent years in our power of making the forces of the natural world minister to our physical needs. 'Look at our telephones and telegraphs,' they will say, 'look at our manufactories increasing daily in activity and variety, look at our intertwined trade routes extending in an elaborate meshwork over the whole face of the habitable globe, look at the food we eat, and the clothes we wear, and the houses we live in, and then contrast all these comforts and conveniences with those which were at the disposal of our forefathers.' No one who contemplates the contrast can question the reality of progress, can doubt that the human race is advancing.

2. Considerations of this kind do not, however, carry complete conviction. We may admit that the modern man, if fortunately placed, eats better, and drinks better than his forefathers did, that he lives in a better house, and travels faster, and communicates with other men more rapidly and profusely. But these advantages belong to the external apparatus of life. The crucial question, the question by which we must test the reality of progress, is whether his own improvement has kept pace with that of his surroundings; whether the modern man is as superior to his predecessors as his outer comforts and conveniences are to theirs. It is not easy to answer this question with an assured affirmative. We cannot say that our modern athletes are stronger and better made than the men who competed in the

[1] H. E. Fosdick, *Adventurous Religion*, 194.

Olympic games or who fought in the Roman amphitheatres: we cannot say that we are producing greater poets than Homer, or greater philosophers than Plato, or greater artists than Phidias, or greater spiritual teachers than the Hebrew prophets. If we make the comparison at a lower level the conclusion is equally disconcerting. We cannot say, for instance, that the average well-educated English gentleman is more intelligent and interesting than the average Athenian gentleman of the time of Pericles, or an abler administrator or law-giver than the average Roman gentleman of the time of Augustus. If we descend to a lower level still, and compare our modern proletariat with that of ancient times, the fact that we have abolished slavery may at first sight incline us to maintain that here a real advance is apparent. This may be true, but those who have an inside knowledge of the lives of some of our working classes will not be inclined to stress its truth. They will acknowledge that it is at any rate an arguable proposition that many a Greek or Roman slave had a better chance of developing his manhood than our slum dwellers have.

In one respect, and that the most important of all, we were accustomed to regard the argument for progress as unanswerable. 'At any rate,' it was said, 'we can discern sure signs of moral progress. There is no doubt that civilized men as a whole are more humane and sympathetic, and self-controlled, and just, and fair dealing than their forefathers were.' But then came the Great War, and to our amazed horror we witnessed the spectacle of a whole nation of highly civilized men apparently casting aside considerations of morality and humanity. The Great War and the events which have followed it have rudely shaken our confidence and complacency. We have become vividly conscious that beneath the surface of civilized life brute forces still exist in unmeasured strength.

¶ If progress means the improvement of human nature itself, the question to be asked is whether the modern civilized man behaves better in the same circumstances than his ancestor would have done. Absence of temptation may produce an appearance of improvement; but this is hardly what we mean by progress, and there is an old saying that the Devil has a clever trick of pretending to be dead. It seems to me very doubtful whether, when we are exposed to the same temptations, we are more humane or more sympathetic or juster or less brutal than the ancients.[1]

3. It is impossible to justify the belief in progress by historical evidence. This evidence can almost equally well be interpreted in the opposite sense. And yet the great majority of active-minded men of Western Europe hold this belief, and think and act under its inspiration. How are we to explain this fact? The civilized races of the ancient world did not share in it. Their golden age was in the past. How comes it that our golden age lies in the future and that our prevailing disposition is to press forward towards the attainment of the treasures we think it has in store for us? Only one explanation is available. Our outlook in this respect is of Christian origin. It is the outlook of a civilization deeply imbued with Christian influences and principles. Behind the belief in progress lies the fundamental Christian conviction that the power of goodness is invincible, and that its final triumph is assured.

Roaming in thought over the universe,
I saw the little that is called Good, steadily hastening towards immortality,
And the vast all that is called Evil, I saw hastening to merge itself and become dead.[2]

It was this conviction which enabled the early Christians to face apparently overwhelming odds and to prevail against their fierce opposition. How did they attain it? How did they come to be dominated and driven forward by it? Only one answer to these questions is possible for any candid student of the New Testament story. Christ had encountered the powers of evil in their concentrated fury and had been overwhelmed by them. It was not merely He who died on Calvary: along with Him died the hopes which He had aroused. It was small wonder that His disciples forsook Him and fled. Not even personal loyalty and devotion can justify perseverance in a hopeless project; and if Christ's failure was final His project was hopeless. But it was not final. Easter Day came and its momentous happenings. 'Christ has risen,' exclaimed His dis-

[1] *Wit and Wisdom of Dean Inge*, 62.
[2] Walt Whitman.

ciples. 'He has triumphed over sin and death.' The message passed from mouth to mouth and from heart to heart. It became at once the basis of an unalterable conviction, the fountain-source of a perennial confidence and power and hope.

Our belief in progress is the outcome of forces generated by this message. It is a heritage passed on to us from generation after generation of men who have been born and bred under Christian auspices; of men whose outlook on life has been dominated by the belief that goodness is more powerful than badness and must in the long run prevail. The significance of the fact that we commemorate at Eastertide is far more than personal. It is the ultimate basis of that belief in progress which is the distinguishing characteristic of our modern civilization. Those who in the name of progress would have us exclude this fact from the realm of historical happenings are making an unreasonable and self-contradictory demand. Such exclusion would mean the drying up of the fountain source from which the stream of progressive effort has hitherto flowed and on which its replenishment depends. A new era dawned on the first Easter morning. The true leaders of progress are those who can discern the light which flowed from the empty grave through the clouds of doubt and sin and walk steadily forward along the path illumined by its rays.

Life's Great Incentive

1 Cor. xv. 19.—'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.'

THE happenings of our time have brought the question of survival after death into the foreground of human interest. There is no need to describe in detail how that has come to pass. The decisive factor has undoubtedly been the War, which has carried away so many of the best lives from the world. They were taken before their powers were developed and fulfilled, and when as yet their lives were a promise to which those who knew and loved them looked forward with keen expectation. Their being cut off in that sudden and cruel way makes the old question recur, 'Is that the end of all things for them? are they one with the dust in which their bodies are laid to rest? or do they live on in another sphere?'

The question has often been asked whether it is right to indulge in speculations as to immortality at all, whether it does not abstract from the energy we bring to present affairs, and whether that man is not on a higher level who, leaving the future on one side altogether, gives his best in the struggle to make this world a better place for men and women to live in. This is the issue which lies at the basis of everything. Does the idea of immortality help us in the tasks and problems of this life or does it lessen our incentives?

There are two extreme views about this fundamental issue. On the one hand, are those whose views were very prominent a short time ago and who still make themselves heard—those who tell us that other-worldliness in any form is a sedative which reconciles us to the injustices and cruelties of present-day life and makes us less keen on setting wrong things right. On the other hand, we have the view expressed here by St Paul, who holds that the greatest things in human life depend upon there being a future for mankind beyond the grave. The one view suggests that immortality robs life of its greatest incentives, the other affirms that it is the source of the incentive. Now which of these two views are we to hold? What is the truth about this matter?

1. Let us admit freely that with regard to any great truth in this world it is possible to distort and to degrade it by little and mean applications. Even the doctrine of immortality may be preached in such a way as to make men less sensitive to present evils. We may say to men in effect, 'There is a good time coming; do not concern yourself with this world; make it your first business to ensure for yourself and others a privileged place in the life to come.' It is certain that such a spirit cannot profess any loyalty to the mind of Christ. He was careful to guard the truth of the life beyond death from any such applications. In His great parable of the Judgment He showed how those who inherit the highest in the next life are those who do most to right the wrongs of this world. Those who feed the hungry and clothe the naked and attend to the varied needs of men here are those to whom the Judge says, 'Come, ye blessed of my

Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'

That is the true application of the doctrine. It ought to make us more and not less keen to achieve the tasks of this world. To show the truth of this it is only necessary to look at the matter from the other extreme. It might be said to the man who rejects the truth of immortality that he is actively encouraging a low view of life and morality because some men might excuse laxity on the ground that this life was all. That has often been done by Christian writers, but it is none the less a false application. We may recall Huxley's famous protest when at the grave of his infant son the words were read, 'If the dead rise not again, let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die.' 'I cannot tell you how inexpressibly they shocked me,' he wrote, 'I could have laughed with scorn. What? because I am face to face with irreparable loss, because I have given back to the source from which it came the cause of a great happiness, still retaining through all my life the blessings which have sprung and will spring from that cause, I am to renounce my manhood, and howling, grovel in bestiality! Why, even the apes know better.' Most men would sympathize with Huxley in that impassioned protest. Yet it is quite true that to a certain type of man disbelief in a future life might have the effect of slackening his moral energies here. Just as the belief may be applied in a wrong way so also may the disbelief. There must always be a careful distinction made between a mental attitude and its applications.

2. What, then, are the issues of faith in immortality? If it is possible to disbelieve in it and yet, like Huxley, to live a noble life in the service of humanity, of what value is the belief? In answering this question another distinction needs to be drawn. It may well be that the ultimate results of disbelief would be deeper and more far-reaching than the immediate ones. A high-minded man would hardly alter his course of living even though he lost all faith in a life beyond, but a general loss of belief would be fraught with disastrous consequences. One cannot inagine a world from which faith in immortality had faded without seeing it as an infinitely more tragic world than the one we know.

Nor is it merely a question of the comfort that the thought of another life brings in the hour of bereavement. The values of life would suffer an inevitable change. We hardly realize the extent to which the truth of immortality forms the background of all our thoughts about personality and its worth. It is the life of man at its highest which will not be fitted into a scheme where everything ends at death.

¶ Hugh Walpole in *The Secret City*, the book in which he writes about the happenings in Petrograd during the stormy days of the revolution, makes one of his characters say: 'There may be another life—who can really prove that there isn't? And when you've seen something in the very thick and glow of existence, something more alive than life itself, and click! it's gone—well it must have gone somewhere, mustn't it? Not the body only, but that soul, that spirit, that individual, personal expression of beauty and purity and loveliness? Oh, it must be somewhere yet, it must be.'

¶ 'I did not pity him,' said Phædo to Echecrates, speaking of Socrates, 'for he seemed to me happy both in his bearing and in his words, so fearlessly and nobly did he die. I could not help thinking that the gods would watch over him still on his journey to the other world, and that when he arrived there it would be well with him, if ever it was well with any man.'

The human protest against death as the end of all must be taken into account. Suppose that protest faced with the hard certainty that death was the end? Suppose there were no faith in immortality? Can we conceive the kind of life which would result? A veil of impenetrable gloom would rest upon the dearest things in life. All love would in a sense be hopeless love. Our brief dream of joy and greatness here would end with the prospect of the long night.

Further, it would have the effect of plunging humanity deeper and deeper into materialism. It would tend to reduce everything to the level of the physical. The finest dreams of humanity are of the triumph of the spirit over material limitations and obstructions. Love's greatness shines the clearest when, faced with impending separation, it holds closely to the vision of permanence; thought pursues its task even amidst bodily decay; and all the dreams of man pass beyond the little limits of life here. But if everything dies with the death of the body

must it not be evident that everything arises from the body, that love is a physical function, that the high tasks of thought are but the adaptation of man's brain to his immediate needs, and that the dreams of the idealists are waste of time? To shut out the beyond is to strike a blow at beauty and imagination and the finest elements of love.

3. Is it possible, then, to say that human energies for the work of this world would be increased if the future were shut out of our vision? We are told that our task is to work for the welfare of the race even after we have passed from the scene, and that we must live and toil for the unborn generations. That sounds an ethically inspiring ideal, and one can admire the man who, without any future hope for himself, labours for the future of mankind. But scientists show us the probability that in course of time this world will become uninhabitable by man. The picture, then, which we are left with is a succession of transient lives, with the death of the race at the end of all. Is such a picture calculated to arouse the best efforts of man? Is not the finest work of the world wrought under the inspiration of the idea that what is built will last, that the gains which are won through toil and sacrifice become forever part of the forces which make for the enrichment of life? What incentive is there to labour for a perfected human society

If every man die for ever, if all his griefs are in vain,
And the homeless planet at length will be wheel'd thro' the silence of space,
Motherless evermore of an ever-vanishing race,
When the worm shall have writhed its last, and its last brother-worm shall have fled
From the dead fossil skull that is left in the rocks of an earth that is dead?

Men may say that in belief the wish is father to the thought, but against that dark background we set the faith that the universe in which we live is a rational one, that it does not produce hearts which weave dreams for which there is no answer; that love when it clings to the hope of meeting again the beloved from whom it is separated is not nourishing a pleasant illusion; that life is the endless reality and death only the outward seeming. Immortality, in short, is an essential part of that faith which, without it, will never overcome the world.

The Promise of the Resurrection

1 Cor. xv. 20.—'The first-fruits of them that are asleep.'

THE resurrection of Jesus Christ is a well-attested historical fact. It is, perhaps, not as easy for us to realize this fact as it was for His contemporaries. These were men who had seen Him both die and live again—men whose witness was consistent and carried conviction. The Corinthian Christians accepted the resurrection of Jesus. To the Apostles and their converts Christianity *was* history. The event was too near to be discredited. Christ died and Christ rose again. Of this no Christian Apostle or layman had any shadow of doubt. It was, indeed, the substance of their teaching and their faith. But some of the Corinthian Christians jibbed at the application. They admitted the physical resurrection of Jesus, but would not admit the resurrection of man.

'Already in the Apostolic age,' writes Prof. J. M. Shaw, 'there were those who under the influence of non-Christian dualistic presuppositions declared that there was nothing more to hope for than a moral and spiritual resurrection. So they asserted that for believers 'the resurrection has taken place already' (2 Tim. ii. 18). And it is a common fashion to-day to endeavour to confine the resurrection to the moral and spiritual side of our nature, and thus to exclude the physical. But this is outwith apostolic thought.[1]

In the words we are considering there are two ideas: one as to the nature of death—that it is a sleep; and the second as to our awaking—that it will be after the manner of Christ.

1. *Death as a Sleep.*—The Apostle drew this conception from the teaching of our Lord. 'Sleep' was Christ's word for death. When He heard people speak of those who were dead, He used to say, 'No, not dead, only asleep.' Of Lazarus He said, 'Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.' So far as we can judge from the Gospels He used the word 'death' only for spiritual death.

[1] *The Christian Gospel of the Fatherhood of God*, 154.

To Him there was no substantiality in what we call death. To Him it was an entirely different thing from what it was to other men. The Apostle speaks of Christ as having 'abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel.' Christ's abolition of it was in this sense—He showed men that it was not what they thought it, that close behind death there was immortal life. Christ looked at it with clearer, other eyes than ours, and discerned that it was not really death, but only nature reposing for a little to awake with freshened and invigorated power in a larger world. Christ looked on the dead and saw that they fell asleep to begin a new day of life. This idea took a very deep hold of men in early times. The Apostles caught it from their Master, and so it passed into the early Church, and became the favourite inscription on the tombs of the departed. In the Roman catacombs, which contain the earliest relics of Christian life and history, there are to be found such inscriptions as these: 'Sleeping in Jesus,' 'He sleeps in peace.' It has been well said that 'if Christ had done nothing more for humanity than give to it this word "sleep" in place of "death," He would have been the greatest benefactor.' To that which seems to us the worst thing He has given the best name. And the name is true.

If he sleep he shall do well;
  One day we shall also sleep,
Hands for long rest folded quiet,
  Sealed eyes that shall never weep.

If he sleep he shall do well,
  For he sleeps to wake again,
Past the doubting, past the dreaming,
  Past the fearing, past the pain.

Well to sleep, but best to waken,
  With the surcease from the strife;
Then smooth-browed, bright-eyed, and rested,
  Rise to wonder, love and life.[1]

2. *The Awakening.*—Our awaking from such sleep will be like to that of Christ. He is the first-fruits of them that sleep.

This word 'first-fruits' has a very definite signification in the Scriptures. There was a commandment given to the people of Israel that when they entered into the possession of the Land of Promise, they were not to begin harvest till they had first cut down a sheaf and presented or waved it before the Lord in thanksgiving, as well as in token that they and their harvests belonged to the Lord. The circumstances connected with the offering of the first-fruits are singularly suggestive of a higher symbolism. The sheaf was offered on the third day after the Passover. In this we see Christ, the sheaf of first-fruits, rising from the dead on the third day after His Passion, the first begotten from the dead, the precursor of the harvest yet to come, the pledge of our resurrection.

(1) The resurrection of Jesus Christ is *the proof and pledge of the resurrection of them that are asleep.* When a farmer holds in his hand the first ripe sheaf of corn he has in possession an unassailable proof that he will have a harvest. More decisive and satisfactory evidence to that effect could not be desired by any reasonable man. Long before this time the precious seed had been cast into the dark bosom of the earth, when no tokens were visible that nature possessed any power of life. But in due season the sun began to warm the sleeping world, the gentle rain from heaven fell upon the place beneath, and the winds of the south whispered of a coming revival. Soon there was first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear, and then the first ripe sheaf telling of a harvest at hand. Christ is the first-fruits of them that sleep, the infallible proof that we too shall rise.

Think of one who never in his life saw a harvest or spoke with anyone to whom it was a familiar thing, one who was well acquainted with sowing but an utter stranger to reaping. Suppose, further, that not one harvest had ever gladdened the earth in any corner of it, and you have some idea of the state of knowledge necessarily possessed by men of old concerning the rising again from the dead. Men had been but too familiar with sowing; from age to age they had committed to the earth all that remained of the fondest, the fairest, the best that they had. Earth had swallowed up an immeasurable quantity of seed without showing any symptom of spring-time or harvest. We need not wonder that the Old Testament gives little light on the great rising again of the people of God. The Psalms and the Prophets

[1] W. Robertson Nicoll.

occasionally show that there was light, but it must have been dim and uncertain, seeing that none had ever risen from the dead to die no more. Enoch and Elijah were removed from the world in a mysterious way; but none of the sons of mortal men had ever risen from the grave to immortality.

¶ In a sheltered corner of my manse garden stands a common red flowering currant bush. I suppose it has no value at all for anybody but me. But I would not exchange it for all the roses in the Major's fine domain across the road. For year after year it gives me the first news of spring. Just after the New Year has come in, I begin to watch it—long before anything else in the garden has stirred. And some still, quiet morning it has its message for me. There is quite a distinct new shade of green on the buds. The wind is bitterly cold and snow showers are about. Everything else in the garden is cold and dead. But it has risen. And the rest will follow in God's good time.[1]

Out on the hills in the wild spring weather
So early only the bluebird knew,
Thousands of little flowers grew together,
Purple, and pink, and white and blue.

While the March storm raged and fretted and wept,
And froze the song in the bluebirds' throats,
'Neath mottled leaf-blankets they soundly slept,
Close wrapped in their soft fur overcoats.

Now the sun shines warm, and under our feet
They nod and smile, though boughs are bare,
So daintily hued and faintly sweet—
What blossoms of summer are half so fair?

And the sweet old sermon is preached again
Of life from death, to the doubter's need,
Of rest after struggle and grief and pain,
The text, 'The Lord is risen indeed!'

But the resurrection of Christ is more than a proof of our resurrection—it is a pledge of the certainty. How can one man's rising give assurance that we shall rise? Did He not rise from the dead purely in virtue of His power and Godhead? What more does that prove than that He was able to rise because He was the strong Son of God? If the Lord had been related to us in the same way as we are related to our fellows, and in no other way, His rising would have proved the possibility of a resurrection, but nothing more. If He had been only our Brother, He could not have been the first-fruits of them that slept, or the pledge of their rising again. But while He was truly our Brother, He was also the representative Head of the race of men.

The Lord Jesus says, 'I am myself resurrection and life'—'life,' and therefore 'resurrection'—'he who believes in me will live even if he dies.' As St Paul puts it, carrying on Christ's own thought, as by man death came, by man came also resurrection from the dead; as all die in Adam (all who belong to Adam's family), so shall all be made alive in Christ (all who belong to Christ). In His resurrection Christ became a life-giving Spirit, the vitalizing principle of a new humanity. That is to say, Jesus in His resurrection is not only 'the first-fruits' from the dead, and as such the earnest and sample of the coming harvest, He is also the principle and potency of the resurrection of those who believe in Him.[1]

The solidarity of our race in ruin is the groundwork of its solidarity in redemption; in a true sense, all Christ's people rose up with Him on the third day, according to the Scriptures.

(2) The resurrection of Christ is *the pattern of our resurrection.* The first sheaf is a specimen or pattern of the harvest at hand. Christ is not only the assurance of our awaking from the sleep of death, but also an illustration of the manner of it. And what stands out clearly is that His personal identity was not lost in the sleep of death. The Christ of the forty days is the same Christ who lived, laboured, suffered, died. We are conscious of no difference in His mental and spiritual characteristics. Whatever changes death wrought, they did not affect His mind or heart.

Personal identity is independent of bodily changes. These bodies of ours are ever undergoing change. But underneath all this change there is a practically unchanged personality. Amid the constant flux of matter there is a will that unites our whole life. It is in the changeable material realm of the body that death works; beyond that its power cannot go. And

[1] Archibald Alexander.

[1] J. M. Shaw.

Christ was subject to death. He passed into its realm, but came forth the same. Whatever changes had passed over Him, they did not extend to the inner realm of His spirit. In this respect He is 'the first-fruits of them that sleep.' Whatever death may do to us, it will leave our personality, our character, untouched. We may say of ourselves:

O living will, that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock.

The Lord's glorified body, as unveiled in the light of His forty days' sojourn after the Resurrection, was so real to the disciples that, after the first natural start of terror, they fell easily into their old ways with Him, and did not seem to feel it a strange thing to walk and talk with One in a glorified state. He was easily recognized by them, for His body had the well-known marks and signs by which they were able to identify Him at once. They could not fail to remember every line of His blessed face; He had been away for only a little while, and it was easy to know Him after the short grief and pain. The body of the Lord was essentially a spiritual one; not any longer confined to the conditions of time, space, and matter, but supreme in power over the world of sense; able to enter a fast-closed room, and to leave it at will; to become visible or invisible as He wished, known or unknown—His was a body that obeyed every wish of the Spirit.

¶ I sent the Queen (January 1885) a little book which contained some verses due to a great sorrow of my own. In her reply she said, 'You surely do *not think*, as it would a little seem from the beautiful poem, *My Yew Tree*, that our dear ones *sleep awhile*, and that their *bodies* are to rise again? I thought you wrote to me once you thought, as I always think one feels one *must*, that the spirit is *at once* free in death, and that you were inclined to believe in a spiritual body *within* our present one?'

To this I replied that the Queen was quite right in supposing that I was in sympathy with the view that the 'spiritual body' (as St Paul calls it) is set free at death. I have never been able to feel that the supposed long sleep and time of unconsciousness is taught us in the New Testament. The phrases I had used in my verses were used in the sense that to us our dear ones seemed to sleep; and that what I had tried to sing was a kind of triumph song, telling the cold earth that her seeming victory was no victory at all.[1]

It is a blessed but at the same time a very awful thought—blessed that our personality will continue, but awful that the character we are now fashioning will pass beyond the river of death. Death will work no sudden, mysterious magical change, as some seem to fancy. Death will but open the gate to another sphere. With such a prospect, 'what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?'

I went down death's lonely stair;
Laid my garments in the tomb;
Dressed again one morning fair;
Hastened up, and hied me home—
Saith the elder brother.

Then I will not be afraid
Any ill can come to me;
When 'tis time to go to bed,
I will rise and go with thee—
Saith the little brother.[2]

The Doctrine of the Fall

1 Cor. xv. 22.—'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.'

1. In the first half of the nineteenth century there existed in this country an accepted standard of religious orthodoxy. There were certain fundamentals on which all were agreed, and on these fundamentals practically all pulpits spoke alike. And this popular orthodoxy had two chief pillars of support. For its belief in God rested on the well-known argument from design; this, again, rested on the dogma of the man of science, which had prevailed in the scientific world for some two hundred years, that all the species of plants and animals were fixed from the beginning, and were substantially what they are now from the day of their creation. And the other pillar of support for the popular orthodoxy concerned the revelation of God given through the prophets and through Jesus Christ. This was made to rest upon the infallibility of Scripture, which was to be accepted in all its statements, on whatever subject, as certainly true.

[1] Bishop Boyd Carpenter, *Some Pages of My Life*, 287.
[2] George MacDonald, *Poetical Works*, i. 348.

Now about the middle of last century both these pillars of orthodoxy were destroyed. Charles Darwin convinced the world that the scientific dogma of the fixity of species was false, and that all the existing kinds of living things had developed out of earlier kinds, and they, again, out of earlier and simpler kinds, running back to the most rudimentary spot of living matter. And he sought to show the process by which this had come about; so that, though science knew nothing about the ultimate origin of things, yet it seemed to many that the universe, once started on its way, could have made itself, and that God the Creator had been either dethroned or banished into some inconceivably remote and misty beginning. In place of Him there was enthroned the idea of progress.

About the same time historical criticism applied to the Old Testament proved that it contains different kinds of literature, for instance, folklore and tradition as well as history, and that in particular the earlier chapters of Genesis give us an account of the beginnings of mankind which could neither historically nor scientifically be taken as facts. This was interpreted popularly to mean that the Bible had been proved not to be true.

Within recent years, however, there has been a reaction. The idol of necessary progress, which was based on science misunderstood and on history ignored, has been in its turn rudely shattered. Science, we now perceive, is quite as well acquainted with deterioration as with advance; and its discoveries have ministered to the destruction of civilization as well as to its support. We seem, in fact, to see our own civilization trembling in the balance. Every one who thinks and cares for the deepest things feels the profound need of a source of moral recovery for the individual and for our whole society such as science can never supply. In all directions men's gaze is directed toward Christ, and science to-day is very much more modest in its claim and expectation. It is said that religion has largely repented of its obscurantism, and we are constantly being assured that the conflict between science and religion is over.

2. There is truth in this; but there is also a great deal of loose thinking. In particular, we are told that one important element in the reconciliation of religion and science is to be the repudiation on the part of religion of the idea or doctrine of the Fall of Man. But let us ask ourselves what exactly this repudiation means—the repudiation of the idea or doctrine of man as a fallen being.

If it means that the early chapters of Genesis are not history, then we can wholly agree. They are plainly folklore, such as mostly lies behind human history. These early stories of Genesis have their root in a folklore which is found also recorded on the Babylonian tablets. But when we read the Babylonian stories we find them morally and spiritually meaningless. On the other hand, when we read the third chapter of Genesis as being not history, but what the early Christian Church called it—moral teaching in the form of a story—we are amazed at its truth. Here we have in a symbol the story of sin as it is all the world over—the suggestion from outside, the tampering with conscience, the false idea of liberty, the act of rebellion, the sense of shame, the consciousness of having lost our true birthright. Adam and Eve are every man and every woman, and their experience the experience of every one of us. We are tempted to say that, if any part of the Bible is manifestly inspired by the spirit of truth, assuredly this part is. We know perfectly well in our own experience what sin is. As an old Greek philosopher said, 'There are certain truths which seize us by the hair of our head and drag us to assent,' and this is one of them. It is contrary to all our experience to talk about sin as if it were something which belonged in its full force to the pre-human stage of our development, or to the barbarian and uncivilized stage of our civilization. Sin takes, no doubt, different forms in barbarous and civilized man, but we know that it shows not the slightest sign of being outgrown. The most civilized societies or individuals may be the most wicked. Our Lord teaches, as emphatically as He teaches anything, that the coarse sins of the body are at least not worse than the refined sins of the will and mind—than pride or hypocrisy or avarice or jealousy. Sin in its broader sense is simply and always rebellion of the will.

It is very often said that the Bible and the Church taught that mankind began at the top, in a state of perfection, and fell to the bottom, but that science has taught us that mankind

began at the bottom and has been slowly climbing towards the top. This is not the case. It is true that John Milton and other theologians have taught that Adam was possessed of the fullest enlightenment as well as the most perfect virtue. The Bible does not suggest that, and the wise thinkers of the Early Church, when asked whether man was created perfect, answered with a decided 'No, he was created with a capacity to acquire virtue and to move towards perfection.' Progress was the Divine purpose for man and for the universe. It is sin that has at every stage thwarted the purpose of God and turned progress into decadence, or diverted it into false channels both in the individual and in the race.

3. There is still something more about this doctrine of the Fall which we must note. It asserts not only that particular men or women have done wrong and reaped the penalty of wrongdoing, but that behind all these particular sins and sinners somehow humanity—human nature as a whole—has gone wrong. Here, again, on grounds of experience, we cannot resist the conviction that we are in contact with truth. Saints and sinners alike have been witnesses that our life is a fallen human nature; it is not in the harmony of things.

¶ No man was ever less of a preacher than Shakespeare, or a better observer of human nature, and yet we see in his plays how there grows upon him one awful impression that somehow the human soul is perverted or obsessed with passion which works its ruin. This conviction is first expressed with terrible intensity in his great Sonnet on lust:—

All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

And this conviction becomes the dominant note of all his great tragedies. It may be ambition in Macbeth and vanity in King Lear and lust in Antony and jealousy in Othello and pride in Coriolanus, but in all it is some perverted or obsessing passion which hands the human soul over to the ministers of its perdition.

Granted that the story of Eden is not historical, then we have no historical knowledge of how this perversion of humanity came about; but somehow it is proved by experience that our humanity is not purely an individual thing, not in its moral personality any more than in its body. We do not start afresh, each one of us, purely individually, affected only externally by the humanity before us and around us. Perhaps the psychologists, with their doctrine of the subconscious mind, may in time help us—that is, may show us grounds for believing that that underground region of our mind is not only the storing-place of the man's individual experiences, but also the carrier of the memories and latent faculties and experiences of the race, even of our pre-human ancestry. Some explanation of this sort may be forthcoming in time. But even while it tarries we know that no theory of man or of his sin can be true which presents him or it as if it were purely individual.

¶ Modern masters of science are much impressed with the need of beginning all inquiry with a fact. The ancient masters of religion were quite equally impressed with that necessity. They began with the fact of sin—a fact as practical as potatoes. Whether or no man could be washed in miraculous waters, there was no doubt at any rate that he wanted washing. But certain religious leaders in London, not mere materialists, have begun in our day not to deny the highly disputable water, but to deny the indisputable dirt. Certain new theologians dispute original sin, which is the only part of Christian theology which can really be proved.[1]

'As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' As we belong to and inherit a common humanity tainted with sin and under the bondage of death, so also we see in Christ another humanity intended to become common to all, which we recognize even from afar as our true manhood, free from all the terrible taint, and radiant with the hope of immortality. To this manhood of Christ we desire to belong, but we must come to Him as sinners, as belonging to a race which needs not only encouragement and example, not only progress and education, but a change of mind—that is, conversion, and a change of state; that is, a new birth of the Spirit of God. We need to be grafted on to a new stock. Only so can we gain a fresh start. Whether the story of the Garden is an historical statement or a symbol,

[1] G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, 22.

it speaks a truth which it is folly and blindness to ignore—that our own nature, and human nature in the gross, if it is to be saved from failure, needs something more than enlightenment, it needs redemption from sin; and there is none other name under heaven whence mankind can look for this redemption than the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Could we find the Secret Garden
That was lost through human sin,
And pass through the guarded portal
To the morning joys within;
See the tree of life still beck'ning,
And the crystal river near;
With the sinless in the garden
Walk with God at eventide clear!

But the thistles are our portion;
By the sweat of brow our bread;
Though a hope within is gleaming,
Like the sun through mist-clouds red,
That we too may find the garden,
Rest beneath its sylvan shade,
When the heat of day is ended
Meet our Father in the glade.

One has found a secret garden,
But its paths are dark with pain,
And the verdure there is crimsoned
With Love's sacrificial stain.
Fruit of life for all is waiting,
None can pluck and give but He
Who has found for us the Garden
Through His own Gethsemane.[1]

The Certain End

1 Cor. xv. 24.—'Then cometh the end.'

THE end is always coming. Nothing that pertains to our mortal life is unending. As soon as anything begins beneath these heavens, with more or less speed it hastens towards its end. We start upon a new business, we build a new house, we set on foot some new measure of public policy, we begin some new study—whatever we do, however long are the anticipations of what we undertake, we all reach the point at last where 'Then cometh the end' is written.

And if we go far out beyond the little reach of our own personal affairs, it is still the same. Our text tells us of Christ. Here is the great work which He is doing—conquering death, redeeming men from sin, claiming the world for God; but even of His work it is written, 'Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.' Even the great redemptive work of Christ must some day be folded up and finished, and some new dispensation, some longer expression of the life of God upon the life of men must come to take its place.

Let us think of this characteristic of life and try to see what it means. Let us see what sort of temper and spirit it ought to produce. And we may begin by noting this—which is the most striking thing about the whole matter—the way in which men's desires and men's fear are both called out by this constant coming of the ends of things.

1. *Man's Desire of the End.*—Look first at man's desire of the end. It is, in the most superficial aspect of it, a part of his dislike to monotony. There is something pathetic in man's instinctive fear of being wearied with even the most delightful and satisfactory of all the experiences which he meets with in the world. Is it not a sign of man's sense that his nature is made for larger worlds than this, and abides here only temporarily and in education for destinies which shall be more worthy of its capacities? Even this earthly life itself, delightfully rich and varied as it is—deep has been the instinct in the human heart which has felt that it would be a terrible thing to have it last for ever.

¶ When Eos (the morning) obtained the gift of immortality for Tithonus she forgot to ask at the same time for immortal youth and vigour for him:

Let me go, take back the gift:
Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of man? . . .
Of happy men that have the power to die.

But this is the most superficial aspect of it. There is something deeper in man's desire to anticipate an end than this. Very early in every experience there comes the sense of imperfection and failure in what we have done,

[1] Frances Lockwood Green.

and the wish that it were possible to begin the game again. And as life goes on that feeling grows. The habit of living becomes so strong that men do not think much about the end, but the expectation of it and the comfort of the expectation of it are still there. Tell any man that he, out of all these mortals, was never to die, that there was to be no end for him, and, whatever might be his first emotion, by and by must come something like dismay; for every man has gathered something which he must get rid of, something which he would not carry always, and so there is promise to him in the coming of the end.

But it is not only the sense of the evil element in life that makes men think with satisfaction of the coming end. So far as life has been a success and developed its better powers, the same satisfaction comes. It is a poor thing for a traveller along a difficult road to look forward to where the road evidently takes a sharp turn into the mountains and say to himself, 'Thank God, there is an end to this! The new road which I cannot see cannot be worse than this which I am travelling now!' But for a man to say, 'This road is glorious, but I am glad to see that it stops yonder; for no doubt beyond is something yet more glorious still'—that is a fine impatience. The noblest human natures are built with such a consciousness of their own capacity, with such an assurance of the richness of living, that all the best which they enjoy and see and are becomes suggestive and prophetic. Perfectly satisfied with it for the present, the moment that one shut down the curtain on it and said, 'That is all,' the exhilaration and splendour would have vanished.

And so in many tones, yet all of them tones of satisfaction, men desire the end. Sometimes it is pathetic, sometimes it is triumphant, but, either way, it rejoices in this arrangement of life by which things do not move on in unbroken processes to their results, but where there are always endings and beginnings. Some are glad because their day's task is done, others are glad because of the new task which they can see opening out beyond them for to-morrow. The end to which they are coming meets their desire.

> Joy, shipmate, joy!
> (Pleas'd to my soul at death I cry,)
> Our life is closed, our life begins,
> The long, long anchorage we leave,
> The ship is clear at last, she leaps!
> She swiftly courses from the shore,
> Joy, shipmate, joy![1]

2. *Man's Fear of the End.*—But now, keeping all this in view, turn to the other side and think of the fear with which men think of the coming of ends in life. There can be no doubt that such dread does come to men when those changes are prophesied which are always sure to be waiting in the distance. Indeed the general sense of the changefulness of things sends a pervasive sense of insecurity through all our ordinary living. Let that be taken away, and it would be as if a dull and threatening day had cleared up into sunshine.

If we cannot give any account of this fear which haunts the life of men and women we can at least see what some of its elements are.

(1) The first of them is the sheer force of habit. It is the inertia of life. That what is should cease to be is shocking and surprising. Let there be no disturbance. So the soul shrinks from change. But even in that dread of inertia there is something which is good. It is good for the tree to love the soil in which it grows and to consent with difficulty to transplanting. It is good that the burden of proof should be on the side of change.

(2) There is something more, however, than this mere force of habit. Very often one shrinks from the announcement of the coming end of the condition in which he is now living because he is aware how far he is from having yet exhausted that condition. A boy has longed to be a man, but when he stands upon the brink of manhood and looks behind him over the yet unreaped acres of his youth, he is almost ready to go back and postpone his manhood till he has taken richer possession of those harvest fields. And so of the great end—the mighty change. Who wants to die so long as this great rich world has only had the very borders of its riches touched? This is no slight tie to life, no small element in the fear of death—this sense of the unexhausted richness of the life we leave.

(3) Even more than this, perhaps, is the uncertainty which envelops every experience which is untried. The passage from light into

[1] Walt Whitman.

light must be always through a zone of darkness. We are feeling this to-day. Old social conditions are ceasing to be possible any longer. In their place new ones are evidently coming, which will be better than those which we have had; but who that feels this most deeply is not conscious of misgiving and of dread as he enters into the cloud of disturbance that hovers between the old and the new? We even dread the end of a condition whose imperfection we know by sad experience. This is a large part of the reason why the most miserable cling to life, counting it better—

to bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of.

Thus we recount our human lot, and see man standing in desire and in fear, at once, of this perpetual change. But in the midst of all this temporariness there must be something which does not pass away, something to which comes no end. The soul and its character, God and His love and glory—these are the eternal things to which there comes no end. We may change our habits, our companionships, our work—everything that we do—but our passion for character and our love for God are the same for ever. New temptations spring upon us and the old hatred of sin leaps on its feet to fight them. New chances of goodness start up unexpectedly, and the old eagerness for goodness cries out and claims them for its own. There are great ends in life. If a man is living in the resolute pursuit of them, he may first welcome, and then rejoice to leave behind, the several means which in succession come to offer him their help toward the attainment of those ends, as the traveller whose heart is set upon some distant city rejoices when he comes to, and then rejoices when he gets beyond, each field and river which must be crossed before he enters the far-off city gates,

¶ The Bishop of London says: 'I found in my old father's study after his death these lines:

Oh, may I, working morn to eve,
Some purpose in my life fulfil,
And, ere I pass, some work achieve
To live and move when I am still.

I ask not with what work combined
My name should down the ages move,
But that my toil some end may find
Which men may bless and God approve.

It was upon Palm Sunday that Jesus rode into Jerusalem in the midst of palm-branches and hosannas. Next Thursday, He is prostrate in Gethsemane. Next Friday, He is hanging on the Cross. Next Sunday, He is rising from the tomb. The great experiences come quick on one another. Joy crowds on sorrow, sorrow presses on the steps of joy. To each comes the quick end. Each is but born before it dies. But one thing never dies—the service of His father, the salvation of the world, the sum and substance of His life!

The Christian Enterprise

1 Cor. xv. 24, 25.—'Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.'

In every way the outlook of man is more extensive now than formerly. The universe is bigger than it was two generations ago. That is to say, men know its bigness better than they did. Where men thought parochially they are now thinking nationally. Where they thought of a nation they are thinking of a Commonwealth. Where they thought of a world they are thinking of a universe. Where they thought materially they are thinking spiritually. In view of this, it is a serious question as to whether the Church of God has kept pace with human development in her grasp upon the extensive glory of her enterprise, and the consequent demand upon her members for heroic service. In other words, are we thinking meanly or majestically of Christianity?

Our text occurs in the midst of a passage than which there is nothing more supremely wonderful in the Bible. At this point, Paul the theologian, the dialectician, the protagonist, climbed to a poetic height which no other seer, Old Testament or New, ever reached. Here he saw far out beyond the things which had been revealed to the rugged and splendid prophets of the Hebrew economy. Paul's vision goes beyond that of John, to a consummation so great and glorious that he can only describe it by employing human language which perplexes the mind.

He saw an end in which the Son will hand over the kingdom to God, that God may be all and in all. Now, if we can grasp the significance of the declaration of our text as interpreted by that whole passage, it will be impossible for us to think meanly of Christianity; and we shall at least begin to apprehend the heroic nature of the demands made upon the followers of the Christ.

Let us look at the statement of our text in the light of its context. The theme is that of the reign of Christ: its cause, its course, and its consummation; but we shall take these things in another order, speaking first of the reign of Christ as to its cause; secondly, of the reign of Christ as to its consummation; thirdly, of the reign of Christ as to its course.

1. *The Cause of Christ's Reign.*—There is a distinction which it is well for us to make in our thinking, the distinction between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of the Son of His love. When we speak of 'the Kingdom of God' we speak of the fundamental fact of His kingship, and of that kingship exercised. When we speak of 'the Kingdom of the Son' we think of that within the Kingdom of God which needed redemption, and which the Son redeems. The Kingdom of the Son is always the redeemed Kingdom. It is in that sense that the Apostle declares that He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet.

This at once suggests the whole dark background, the nature of which may be expressed in two of the most familiar words of our religious thinking, Sin and Death. Sin is the revolt of the highest factor in that creation of which man is the centre, the revolt of the will against the government of God. Death, resulting in human experience from human sin, is the ultimate disaster, as Paul says, 'the last enemy.' Christ reigns in order to put an end to sin, and in order to put an end to death. In order to deal with these things He was crowned King. 'He was crowned with glory and honour that he might taste death for every man.' Observe the real significance of that declaration. It is not that He was crowned because He tasted death for every man. His crown was not a reward given to Him for dying. He was crowned, He was made King, in order to grapple with sin and with death, and master them. Men in mockery, cruelty, and brutality gave Him a crown of thorns; but by the purpose of His will, and the power of His love, He transfigured the crown of thorns, so that it is indeed the diadem of His redemptive empire. The Kingdom of the Son is the redeemed Kingdom. He must reign as Christ, till He hath put all enemies under His feet.

2. *The Consummation of Christ's Reign.*—St Paul distinctly affirms here that Christ's reign will end, that He will not always reign, in the sense in which He is reigning now. 'He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.' The declaration is not that when He has subdued His enemies He will begin to reign. It is that then He will finish reigning. The Kingdom of the Son will end with the abolition of all destructive forces. It will end with the cession of the redeemed Kingdom to God, and with the subjecting of the Son Himself to the Kingship of God.

In the words 'rule,' 'authority,' 'power,' the Apostle is giving us a picture of the whole organized empire of evil. Whatever our modern thinking may be, these New Testament writers had a clear conception of the empire of evil as a very highly organized empire. St Paul lived amid the most appalling conditions of human government and rule. We have only to think of him at the great centres where he taught to see what he had before him as he wrote. Think of Rome and of Corinth! They were centres and hotbeds of unnameable corruptions. These men saw these things with clear eyes; but they also saw, behind the material manifestations, the dark spiritual forces. 'We wrestle not against flesh and blood.' They saw flesh and blood, corrupt, sensual, ruined. But, said the Apostle, we do not wrestle with flesh and blood; we have to deal with the dark and sinister system of evil that lies at the back of this corruption. That was the apostolic outlook; and here St Paul declares that Christ must reign as King until He has abolished all these evil things.

Gods of the world! ye warrior host
Of darkness and of air,
In vain is all your impious boast,
In vain each missile lightning tost,
In vain the Tempter's snare!
Though fast and far your arrows fly,
Though mortal nerve and bone

Shrink in convulsive agony,
The Christian can your rage defy :
Towers o'er his head Salvation's crest,
Faith, like a buckler, guards his breast,
Undaunted, though alone.

—'Tis past ! 'tis o'er ! in foul defeat
The Demon host are fled !
Before the Saviour's mercy-seat
(His live-long work of faith complete),
Their conqueror bends His head.
' The spoils Thyself hast gain'd, O Lord !
I lay before Thy throne :
Thou wert my rock, my shield, my sword ;
My trust was in Thy name and word :
'Twas in Thy strength my heart was strong ;
Thy Spirit went with mine along ;
How was I then alone ? ' [1]

Thus the consummation of the reign of the King will be the abolition of all the forces of evil ; the subjugation of the enemies of humanity which are the enemies of the reigning Christ, beneath His feet ; and finally, the abolition of the last enemy, death.

When we come to the height of the Apostle's vision—when the reigning Christ will yield the redeemed Kingdom to the Father—the expositor must stand aside, knowing that the final exposition can be given only under sanctified imagination to spiritually taught souls. Such will follow the Apostle, and see him peering through the mists to the final unveiling of the ultimate glory. What was it that he really saw ? The Kingdom, in the midst of which we are living, with its wounds, and its weariness, and its wickedness, ransomed, redeemed, renewed by its King and then handed over to God, the Eternal Ruler, even the Father. In that hour of high and glorious victory, God will rest in His righteousness, and He will rest in His grace.

There follows the mystic declaration that even the Son shall be subjected. The eternal union of the Son with the redeemed creation means the subjecting of the Son with that creation to the ultimate government of God. In relation with this statement of St Paul we remember a phrase of St Peter in which he refers to the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. These two conceptions are not contradictory, but complementary. The Son is for ever identified with His ransomed creation in union with it, and so is an eternal King. Yet He will hand over that Kingdom, together with Himself as Head of it, to God.

[1] Heber.

These are the words of blessed Paul,
' God shall at last be all in all.'
Herein his words make truly known,
God will at last recall His own.
These words of blessed Paul imply
That all in dying do not die.
To all ' the end,' be what it may,
Come in mid-darkness or mid-day,
' Cometh,' he says. Then it shall fall,
So that ' God may be all in all.'
In these brave words of blessed Paul,
' God shall at last be all in all.' [1]

3. *The Course of Christ's Reign.*—It is as the Risen One that Christ reigns. He who was dead is alive for evermore, and holds the keys. His holding of the keys resulted from His resurrection. But resurrection involves death. One who has never died cannot be spoken of as one who has risen. Therefore it is the Crucified who reigns ; but the Crucified who is risen. Whenever we think of this reigning Christ, whether it is as in conflict with the sinister and dark background of sin and death, or as accomplishing the glorious consummation and completion of the purpose of His reigning—we must never forget that His reign is based upon the two great facts of the Cross and the Resurrection. The Cross consummated by the Resurrection is the course of His reign. By these He regains the throne, and puts down all false rule. By these He accomplishes results, and masters all opposing power. The reign of Christ is the reign of the ascended King who has provided all the forces that are necessary for the remaking of humanity, and so defeated the powers which destroy.

Christ descended into death to abolish death, and lives again to give life to men. That is the first fact in the process of the reign. Then the long procession and continuity of these slowly passing centuries move up to the next occasion, and by the same way. Apostles, witnesses, and martyrs, what are they all doing ? They are sharing in the life that Christ bestowed, and they are sharing in the suffering of the Christ. And so the time

[1] *Sunday Afternoon Verses* (ed. W. Robertson Nicoll), 81.

approaches when He shall come, and they shall share His triumph. Then away out, somewhere beyond, cometh the end, when the infinite splendour of the Divine order is realized; and that end will come by the way of death and resurrection, of defeat and victory, of travail and triumph.

¶ I know not why it is, but if I sink in spirit, and I do so often, I very seldom get any cordial anywhere except from this one thing, 'Christ must reign.' 'Then,' I have said in my soul, 'what becomes of me is of no consequence at all, if He will only take me into the royal galley and chain me down to the oar and let me tug and pull till I have no more life left. I will be satisfied if I may but row with my Lord towards His throne, and have but the smallest share in making Him great in the eyes of men and angels. What cares my heart for herself if I may but see Jesus set on high! It is a heaven to me to think that Christ is in Heaven, and it is another Heaven to believe that He will yet reign among men.'[1]

This, then, is the Christian enterprise. Its purpose is vast, and its method demands the highest heroism. At the beginning we see the Christ Himself, the King. And what of His way? It was the way of suffering, of self-denial and sacrifice, and every Christian must travel that same way. Why is there so stern a message at the gate of the Kingdom? Why are the demands of the Lord so insistent upon His own after they enter? Because all His own are called upon to share His way, that they may share in His victory; because the business upon which they enter is big, God's business. This creates the glory and the greatness of being a Christian.

The Beasts

1 Cor. xv. 32.—'If I have fought with beasts.'

It is generally held that the beasts with which St Paul fought at Ephesus were not the wild beasts in the arena, but the fierce Ephesians themselves. So our enemies are sometimes human beings who resist and persecute us, and the more fiercely the more they see the likeness to Christ in our words and in our life. But we may take the same liberty as the Apostle, and carry his metaphor from men to our own sins.

[1] C. H. Spurgeon.

1. Between a man and his sins there is enmity. Each hates the other.

(1) In the first place *sin hates man.* The proof of that is the harm that sin does man, a harm that men are always coming to discover in deeper and deeper symptoms of it, and of which even the men who cling most obstinately to its service are aware. As soon as we get in the least below the surface of our life there comes the conviction, even to the wilful sinner, that his sin is his enemy. Does he not know it, the man who, every day while he sins, feels the jewels plucked one by one out of his crown, and the stain sinking deeper and deeper into the very substance of his soul? Do not we ourselves know it when we do a wrong act, and almost hear the power of evil laugh as he drags us back one hard step farther from our heaven?

(2) And if sin hates man, *man hates sin.* Is that true? The glory of the Bible is that it is full of the idea that the essential humanity, man as God made him, man 'pure in heart,' man as the child of God, does not love sin, but hates it. With all the intensity with which it asserts man's perverse clinging to sin, it implies, it declares everywhere, that that clinging to sin is diseased; that the true healthy manhood which God first made, and which Christ is trying to restore, shrinks from it and loathes it. Of that manhood we every now and then catch glimpses in the vilest men, something which by its look bears witness to us that it is the truest part of them, which has still left in it something of that antagonism to sin which is the life of the holy God they sprang from.

2. But if a man and his sins are always enemies, the force of the enmity is not felt until a man has turned to God. Dante tells us that it was when he essayed to climb the sunlit hill that his way was challenged. It is a very ancient problem. The Psalmist marvelled that, whilst the wicked around him enjoyed a most profound and unruffled tranquillity, his life was so full of perplexity and trouble. John Bunyan was arrested by the same inscrutable mystery. Why should he, in his pilgrim progress, be so storm-beaten and persecuted, whilst the people who abandoned

themselves to folly enjoyed unbroken ease? Many a young and eager convert, fancying that the Christian life meant nothing but rapture, has been startled by the discovery of the beasts of prey awaiting him.

3. What are the names of the beasts? The three fierce creatures that challenged Dante's ascent of the sunlit hill were a panther, a lion, and a wolf, and these three represent evils of various kinds and characters. If a man cannot be deterred by one form of temptation, another will speedily present itself. It is, as the old prophet said, 'as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.' If one form of evil is unsuccessful, another instantly replaces it. If the panther is driven off, the lion appears; and if the lion is vanquished, the lean wolf takes its place. But there is more than this hidden in the poet's parable. Did Dante intend to set forth no subtle secret by placing the three beasts in that order? Most of his expositors agree that he meant the panther to represent *Lust*, the lion to represent *Pride*, and the wolf to represent *Avarice*. Lust is the besetting temptation of youth, and therefore the panther comes first. Pride is the sin to which we succumb most easily in the full vigour of life. We have won our spurs, made a way for ourselves in the world, and the glamour of our triumph is too much for us. And avarice comes, not exactly in age, but just after the zenith has been passed. The beasts were not equidistant. The lion came some time after the panther had vanished; but the wolf crept at the lion's heels. What a world of meaning is crowded into that masterly piece of imagery!

¶ Avarice is the vice of old age in the sense that the experiences of life are often taken as an excuse—and a powerfully plausible one—for niggardliness. It calls itself prudence: it withers the love of better and nobler things, and renders all work valueless. The vital power goes out of every effort: so these sinners lie prostrate on the ground, useless and unprogressive. Their faces are set now, as in their life below, earthward. Like the fallen angels who, even in heaven, looked not upward to God but downward to gain:[1]

> . . . Mammon led them on—
> Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell
> From Heaven; for even in Heaven his looks and thoughts
> Were always downward bent, admiring more
> The riches of Heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
> Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed
> In vision beatific.[1]

4. The beasts approach each in its own way. The panther crouches, springs suddenly upon its unsuspecting prey, and relies on the advantage of surprise. Such are the sins of youth. 'Alas,' as George Macdonald so tersely says—

> Alas, how easily things go wrong!
> A sigh too deep, or a kiss too long.
> There follows a mist and a weeping rain,
> And life is never the same again.

The lion meets us in the open, and relies upon his strength. The wolf simply persists. He follows our trail day after day. We see his wicked eyes, like fireflies, stabbing the darkness of the night. He relies not upon surprise or strength, but on wearing us down at the last. Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth—having beaten off the *panther*—beware of the *lion* and the *wolf*. And, still more imperatively, let him that thinketh he standeth—having vanquished both the *panther* and the *lion*—take heed lest he fall at last to the grim and frightful persistence of the lean *she-wolf*.[2]

[1] W. Boyd Carpenter, *The Spiritual Message of Dante*, 168.

The Personal Equation in Christian Belief

1 Cor. xv. 32-34.—'If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die. Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.'

In this famous chapter St Paul argues for the persistence of life, vindicating the doctrines of resurrection and immortality, basing his reasoning on the resurrection of our Lord. 'If it is but with mortal hopes and aims that I have battled, like some gladiator, with veritable wild

[1] *Paradise Lost*, Book 1.
[2] F. W. Boreham, *Faces in the Fire*.

beasts here in Ephesus, what is the good of it all? If dead men never rise, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. Ah, but, in real truth Messiah *has* been raised from the dead! and (since one resurrection disproves the impossibility) He is the first sheaf of a great harvest. Such is the contention of the Apostle. The text, however, seems to be an interruption to the great argument, and at the first glance it appears somewhat irrelevant and misplaced. Yet a little reflection shows that it is a parenthesis quite in place, and one of weightiest signification. The Apostle reminds his readers that faith in the great future is not simply a question of logic, but also a question of the state of mind we bring to the consideration of the subject. He emphatically declares that it is possible for men so to live that their vision may be blurred, their sensibilities dulled, and they themselves may become incapable of great ideals and hopes.

1. We may say that none of our beliefs is determined by pure reason, but in every case they are affected more or less by various extraneous factors, often entirely unsuspected; and this is specially true in regard to religious beliefs.

(1) *Personal bias* may hinder appreciation of great truths. That our convictions and sentiments influence our action is clearly the case; but it is equally indisputable that our mode of life reacts upon the mind and colours our reasoning. It is simple illusion to suppose that bare logic is all that is concerned in the formation of our opinions, whether philosophical, political, or religious. The pressure of personality subtly deflects the logical process. Our personal qualities, our sympathies and antipathies, our interests and ambitions bias us one way or another, and materially affect the verdict we find.

¶ Professor J. Arthur Thomson says, 'The scientific worker is well aware that in measurements and observations the accuracy attainable is only approximate, and that the degree of approximation varies with the individual. The personal equation has been for a long time frankly recognized and allowed for in astronomy; it is also sometimes estimated in chemistry and physics; but it must be recognized all round.'[1]

In this fact we discern a justification of the Apostle's position. Those erring members of the Corinthian Church had suffered their minds to be corrupted through intimacy with the evil society from which they ought resolutely to have severed themselves, and they were no longer competent to judge impartially a spiritual question, or to hold firmly the splendid ideals and hopes of the Christian faith. Their attitude to it was no longer sympathetic and responsive, but suspicious, critical, resistant. When the 'personal equation' is strong and adverse, it makes sad havoc with logic, especially where religious truth is concerned, which demands the utmost sincerity and purity of purpose in those to whom it appeals.

¶ Astronomers suffer much from the inaccuracy of the images viewed in their telescopes in consequence of the disturbances in the atmosphere, common even in clear weather. Hence observatories have been established at stations where the atmosphere is calm and little disturbed by currents. But on investigation Professor Langley, of Washington, discovered that a good deal of the perturbation of telescopic images arises from currents *within the telescope itself*. The first important matter, therefore, if the astronomer would see clearly, is that he wholly eliminate the disturbance within the tube itself. Living as we do in a world where there is so much outside us to mar our spiritual vision, the first and essential thing is nevertheless that we free ourselves from the disturbing currents within—the moods, tempers, and sympathies which vex and falsely bias the soul.

(2) *Unsympathetic society* may make it difficult, and in the end perhaps impossible, to appreciate the highest truth. In his advice to painters, Leonardo da Vinci writes thus: 'The painter requires severance from companions who are not in sympathy with his studies. His companions should resemble him in a taste for these studies; and if he fail to find any such, he should accustom himself to be alone. If you must have companionship, choose it from your studio. All other companionship may prove extremely harmful.' So intolerant is art: lest the thought of the artist should be distracted to foreign objects, his time for practice restricted, or his enthusiasm abated, he must confine himself to studios, live with artists, consort with them only. There is nothing, therefore, that is singular or unreason-

[1] *Introduction to Science*, 19.

able in the insistence with which Christian teachers demand the severance of the spiritual from a worldly generation. To a certain extent they must of necessity dwell together; but intimate voluntary friendship is a peril which must be shunned. If a cube of lead be placed on a cube of gold, the two metals slowly but inevitably begin to penetrate each other; similarly we tend to imbibe the spirit, to share the opinions, to partake of the qualities, of our intimate associates: only in this case we may fear that the lead is more likely to debase the gold than the gold is to enrich the lead.

Therefore 'tis meet
That noble minds keep ever with their likes,
For who so firm that cannot be seduced?

Here, again, we find justification for the apostolic admonition. The front of the offending of these doubtful brethren was their free intercourse with their pagan neighbours. In spite of repeated apostolic warnings they continued to mix with the heathen, frequenting their haunts, listening to their talk, partaking in their impure pleasures.

The Apostle's solemn warning is still necessary. It is popularly assumed that religious questions are settled by argument, and that good men and bad are equally competent for their decision. Without any reference to character people presume themselves entirely qualified to debate and decide the most solemn questions of life and destiny. No matter what their character, history, or habits, they consider themselves entitled to pronounce with absolute assurance on the highest themes. Not so, responds the Apostle: great beliefs are not arrived at by reasoning, but rather do men live themselves into such beliefs, or live themselves out of them. We may confidently affirm that it is possible so to live that it is natural to believe grand truths, inevitable and delightful to believe them; or it is possible so to live that such truths appear increasingly incredible. 'Be not deceived.' Evil associations work insidiously, deceivingly, yet in the end they stultify the soul, destroy its sensibilities: none are clever enough, strong enough, good enough, to withstand their seductive power.

¶ The disturbing influence of the increasing electrification of the suburban railways has necessitated the removal of the chief magnetic observatory from Greenwich to Abinger Common, about one mile from Leith Hill.[1]

¶ There is a beautiful wild bush with bright green leaves and drooping clusters of red coral-like fruit often growing in hedges. It is called the barberry. Sometimes on the back of its leaves that look more limp and faded-like than the others, you will find a collection of pretty little round cups filled with yellow powder. This is the young stage of a fungus or mould. The wind scatters the powdery seed of these cups over the wheat fields that may happen to be on the other side of the hedge, and settling on the green stems, it grows and speedily reaches its maturity, and produces those black smutty ears which you see among the wheat. Take up one of these black ears of wheat, and you will find that it is filled with a nauseous soot-like substance, which stains your fingers and has a disagreeable smell. It changes the nourishing material of our bread into dust and ashes, and if eaten would produce disease and death. I have often seen a large part of a wheat-field infected in this way, and I have traced the mischief to barberry bushes in a neighbouring hedge. The loss to the farmer is often very great. Indeed, so serious is this plague that in the United States of America there is a law compelling people to root out and destroy barberry bushes wherever they find them, lest they should spoil the wheat harvest.[2]

2. Let us look now at certain dangers that beset the faith and against which we have to be specially on our guard.

(1) We cannot acquire or retain a great faith *whilst living in unrighteousness.* 'Awake to righteousness, and sin not.' The history of the classic nations sufficiently demonstrates the blinding power of unrighteousness. The conception of the Deity underwent terrible degradation. They 'changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things' (Rom. i. 23). And the conception of humanity was similarly debased. 'If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die' was the call of one of their great poets. When men are willing to live like animals they soon adopt an animal's catechism. Thus the Apostle warns

[1] *The Sphere*, April 16, 1927. [2] Hugh Macmillan.

the backsliding brotherhood of Corinth that commerce with the heathen is tending to injure their conscience, to tarnish their character, and, as a necessary consequence, to make it increasingly difficult for them to hold their transcendent faith.

How glaringly false is the assumption that we arrive at larger knowledge, true wisdom, and clearer vision of higher things only as we pass through stages of licence! It is only along the line of sincere purpose and strict morality that we may hope to reach a knowledge of the truth. The warning words of Victor Hugo are worthy to be written in letters of gold: 'Let us never forget that the highest is only attained through the high.' He who would hold a creed worth holding must find it through practising the best that he knows.

(2) High spiritual beliefs are impossible *whilst we live the sensual life.* St Paul tells these wavering disciples that it is impossible for the high and spiritual thought of the resurrection and the resurrection life to exist in the heated atmosphere of Epicureanism. The Christian ideal must be nurtured in a brighter and purer air. There is no 'looking for the blessed hope' except the soul is kept clear by abstinence, purity, and discipline.

¶ Sir Hall Caine writes of Dante Gabriel Rossetti that 'he was not an atheist, but an unbeliever. In face of death his attitude was one of waiting; he did not know.' But how could it have been otherwise with one living that particular life of indulgence? His sister Christina, who lived in the Spirit, saw visions, and realized in them consolation and power. As her biographer writes, 'For her the western skies are ablaze with the magnificent colours not of a sunset, but of a sunrise. Her hope is unvexed by a single doubt. It is strong and assured. She sings her hymn of the blessednesses which are laid up for them that love God, like some lark that has climbed the golden stairs to the very entrance gates of the better country. The heavenly Jerusalem is as dear to her, and as familiar, as to the exiled Apostle or to St Bernard. She prays that soon, brought home in peace, she may have her own place among its citizens and walk in white. And God has given her her heart's desire, and has not withheld the request of her lips.'

(3) If the great hope is to be kept brightly in view, we must be careful *how we live our ordinary life.* Our age is one of astonishing material and industrial progress; we have acquired vast wealth, and enjoy an exceptional abundance of good things. Is not the temptation and peril of our time here? Is not this large measure of liberty, leisure, and luxury stealing away our heart from God? Are we not forgetting our highest nature in the riot of meaner things, our inmost needs in our bodily needs? How can we continue to hold a grand creed if we persist in reducing life to the miserable formula, 'What shall we eat? what shall we drink? and wherewithal shall we be clothed?' By the vivid consciousness of God's being, of His goodness, and of His claims, we must sanctify all temporal things to the end for which He ordained them, if we are to keep intact and radiant the hope that redeems and glorifies all that we have or are.

The Doctrine of the Resurrection of Man

1 Cor. xv. 35-44.—'But some one will say, How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come? Thou foolish one, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain . . . but God giveth it a body. . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.'

In this passage we have, briefly, the New Testament doctrine of the resurrection of man.

The treatment of such a theme is far from unnecessary, as no doctrine has been so much misunderstood. And yet there are few so definitely stated. This doctrine, which distinguishes most carefully between the present body and the spiritual body, stood out in strong contrast with the popular teaching of Judaism; for, according to the Talmud and other Jewish writings, the resurrection was generally conceived to be a restoration pure and simple of the present body, or some portion of it, by the reunion of the material elements of which it was composed at death. It was thus mainly a resuscitation of the flesh, not in any sense a resurrection in the New Testament sense of the word. And yet many of the most prominent of the early Fathers of the Church taught a resuscitation of the self-same body that the

spirit had left at death. This materialistic doctrine is found in all the original forms of the Apostles' Creed, which down to the sixteenth century read: 'I believe in the resurrection of the flesh'—a statement in direct conflict with the New Testament: 'Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God.'

About the middle of the sixteenth century this clause was changed into: 'I believe in the resurrection of the body.' Among the early Fathers who forced this gross materialism on the Church might be mentioned Tertullian, Augustine, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Jerome. Jerome developed this view to extreme lengths, and maintained the absolute identity of the resuscitated body and the present body—even the hair of the head will be raised; for 'the hairs of your head are all numbered'!

But, however unscriptural this view of Jerome is, we repeat it when we sing:

> On the Resurrection morning
> Soul and body meet again;
> No more sorrow, no more weeping,
> No more pain!

The belief that the material body would be raised again was an ancient heathen doctrine, and led to the embalmment of the body and the building of the Pyramids. It made its way into Judaism, but it has neither part nor lot in Christianity.

This doctrine of the resuscitation of the material body, which is unscriptural, is also unscientific. Most people now are aware that the matter of our bodies is constantly changing; that of all the material particles of which our bodies were composed seven years ago not a single one remains: all have been replaced, and the change is going on from moment to moment. By some mysterious process we are gathering to ourselves new material and discarding the old. And yet, amid all these changes we are the same persons. There is something fixed which gives form and shape and organization to this ever-flowing current of matter, which is momentarily condensed into what we call our bodies. Now, this something, St Paul teaches, is the spirit of man, which, when freed from the body, forms a fresh body for itself adapted to the spiritual kingdom it has entered; or, rather, even in this life it has partly or wholly fashioned that spiritual body.

1. To that doctrine of the resurrection certain objections were evidently raised by the Corinthians, and so we read: 'But some one will say, How are the dead raised, and with what body do they come?' To which the Apostle rejoins: 'Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.' The death of the seed consists in the decomposition of its material wrapping. By this process the living principle within it is set free, and seizes hold of the matter that is around it, with which it forms for itself a new body. In like manner the Apostle teaches that the resurrection is effected through death itself. What appears as the insurmountable obstacle is itself a necessary means. The spirit of man must free itself from the corruptible body which contains it before it receives its new and incorruptible body.

¶ 'Mr Ruskin came to see me one day,' says Spurgeon, 'and amongst other things he said that the Apostle Paul was a liar and that I was a fool!' 'Well,' I replied, 'let us keep the two things separate; so first of all tell me how you can prove that the Apostle Paul was a liar!' 'He was no gentleman, and he was a liar too,' answered Mr Ruskin. 'Oh, indeed,' I rejoined. 'How do you make that out?' 'Well,' he said, 'there was a Jewish gentleman came to him one day, and asked him a polite question—"How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" Paul began by saying to him, "Thou fool"—which proved that the Apostle was no gentleman; and then he continued, "That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die," which was a lie.'

'No,' I answered, 'it was not a lie. Paul was speaking the truth.' 'How do you prove that?' asked Mr Ruskin. 'Why,' I replied, 'very easily. What is death? Death is the resolution into its elements of any compound substance which possessed life.'

Mr Ruskin said, 'That is the most extraordinary definition of death that I ever heard, but it is true.' 'Yes,' I said, 'it is true, and that is what happens to the seed when it dies; it is resolved again into its original elements, and the living germ which is within it becomes the centre and source of the new life that springs out of it.'

'Then,' said Mr Ruskin, 'what do you mean when you talk of the death of the soul?' 'I mean,' I replied, 'the separation of the soul

from God; it was originally with God, and when it is separated from Him it dies to God; that is its death, but that death is not non-existence. The separation of the soul from the body is the separation from itself of that which quickened it, and it falls back into its original condition.'[1]

2. Having answered the first question, the Apostle now addresses himself to the second, as to the nature of the resurrection body: 'With what body do they come?' That is, What is the nature of the resurrection body? This body, so far from being the former body resuscitated, will have, he declares, characteristics of quite an opposite kind. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a psychical body, it is raised a spiritual body. The psychical body is simply a body that is a suitable organ for the soul in this material world, just as the spiritual body is a body that is a suitable organ for the spirit in the spiritual world.

Let us now return to the words: 'It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption.' The words 'it is sown' are understood by nearly ninety-nine persons out of a hundred as referring to the mere burial of the body in the grave. But such an interpretation is absolutely wrong. For the Greek word used never means 'to bury.' You sow a living thing; you bury a dead thing. The spirit of man is placed in a material environment here on earth, so that it may fashion for itself a body, adapted so far as possible for its expression, out of the materials around it, just as a seed of corn gathers to itself a body from the material earth around it. Thus the entire life of man in this world—from its first appearance to the obsequies that attest its departure—corresponds to the sowing of the seed in the earth.

Next, the phrase 'in dishonour,' refers to the body we bear in our present low estate, which St Paul elsewhere terms 'the body of our humiliation' (Phil. iii. 21), which body is to be changed into the form of the body of Christ's glory. Next, 'weakness' is another apt description of the body as an instrument of the spirit; 'the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak,' but to apply such a term to the dead body would be absurd. Finally, the present body is psychical; that is, it is an organ of the lower side of man's being, that is, his soul, whereas the spiritual body is an organ of the spirit.

Thus, whereas the psychical body is corruptible and clothed with humiliation and weakness, the spiritual body will enjoy incorruptibility, glory, and power. Hence between the two bodies there is no exact continuity. Our full possession of the one depends on the death of the other. And yet there is an essential likeness between them. This likeness comes from the fact that they are successive expressions of the same personality though in different spheres. It is the same vital principle that organizes both.

¶ I claim to go on after death with my own individual identity. I claim to have this revival of memory, this renewal of life, this continuity of being. When I say 'continuity of being,' I admit that the continuity may be broken by a sleep, just as the continuity of our being here is broken by the torpor and exhaustion which come upon us at nightfall. But the instant we wake we gather together our energies again, we renew the thread of consciousness, the sun arises, we remember and understand, and are ourselves.[1]

3. In conclusion, it may be asked: How does the doctrine that the faithful receive their spiritual bodies immediately after death agree with the doctrine of the general resurrection? These two elements of the faith are not in conflict. For the one doctrine deals with the blessedness and glory of each faithful soul when it passes from this world, whereas the general resurrection deals with the blessedness and glory of the completed and perfected community of God. There is also a further difference. The blessedness and glory of the individual saints who have died, and shall die, before the consummation of the world can only be partial and incomplete. Not until all the faithful are gathered home to the kingdom of the blessed shall their blessedness be wholly fulfilled; for in the Kingdom of God the blessedness of the individual soul is conditioned by that of all the rest, and no soul can attain its highest save in the life of the blessed and completed community. Even the greatest saints

[1] W. Y. Fullerton, *C. H. Spurgeon*, 167.

[1] H. R. Haweis.

of all the ages past cannot attain their perfection till the roll of all the saints is complete. Not till the last and weakest of God's children have been won for the Kingdom can they be made perfect.

The Analogy in Nature

1 Cor. xv. 36-38.—'Thou foolish one, that which thou thyself sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other kind; but God giveth it a body even as it pleased him, and to each seed a body of its own.' (R.V.)

The Apostle finds in nature certain analogies, which, although they cannot prove, at least illustrate and confirm his faith, and they show us that the 'miracle' of the resurrection, if we will but see it, is always taking place before our eyes.

Let us take, then, two simple points for our consideration. (1) The special use that St Paul makes of the illustration from nature; and (2) the general use which his method of argument warrants us in making of it.

1. *The Special Use of the Illustration from Nature.*—Analogy is, of course, not proof. The proof of the general resurrection, upon which St Paul insists, is the resurrection of our Lord. He summarizes the simple and undeniable evidences, consisting mainly of the straightforward testimony of unimpeachable witnesses, and, boldly taking his stand upon it, declares that the dead are certainly raised because Christ has been raised. The one fact of the actual resurrection of Jesus silences the thousand and one objections to the possibility of resurrection.

But now he hears the objection, 'If the dead are raised, with what manner of body do they come?' 'How are the dead raised?' Now this objector assumes, what so many people assume, that the only resurrection possible is that of the literal and identical flesh and blood which here and now clothe our spirits. So St Paul's reply to this man is, 'That which thou thyself sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain.' And—'God giveth it a body.'

Clearly, then, the Apostle's argument is that, as in the natural world seed must be sown, so must we be sown; that as seed must die in order that it may live, so our death is essential to our resurrection; and that as the body that springs from the buried seed is vaster, fuller, and more beautiful than the seed itself, so our bodies of future glory shall be other and better than these preliminary bodies of the earth. To these distinct points of analogy let us turn our attention.

(1) *As all seed is sown, so are we sown.* Do not let us miss the point of this analogy. The Apostle cannot mean that we are sown when our bodies are put into the ground. That is impossible. The body so deposited is lifeless. How, then, can it be sown? The grain of wheat is not lifeless, and when put into the soil its latent life is at once acted upon, and ultimately liberated.

St Paul's emphatic 'thou thyself' clearly marks a parallel between the 'foolish one's' sowing and God's: that as man sows wheat, so God sows human life. And when and where does God 'sow' our lives? 'The field is the world,' our world of bodily life and sensation and experience. Whenever a soul comes into time God places a germ of spiritual life in this 'field.' For within every human life, as in every grain of wheat, there is the potency of a higher, richer, fuller existence.

¶ When the ground in London was cleared of the old buildings to make the new Kingsway, it lay for a year exposed to the light and air. A strange sight drew naturalists to the ruins. In some cases the soil had not felt the touch of Spring since the day when the Romans sailed up the Thames and beached upon its strand. When the sunlight poured its life upon this uncovered soil a host of flowers sprang up. Some were unknown in England. They were the plants the Romans had brought with them. Hidden away in the darkness, lying under the mass of bricks and mortar, they seemed to have died. But under the new conditions, obeying the law of life, they escaped from death and blossomed into a new beauty.[1]

The Apostle's language in detail necessitates this view. 'It is sown in corruption,' he says: the life within is sown in surroundings which slowly disintegrate the mere shell or covering. Our bodies, like the outward shell of the wheat, are always breaking up. 'It is sown in dishonour.' These bodies are 'bodies of humilia-

[1] W. M. Clow, *The Cross in Christian Experience.*

tion.' Our highest thoughts, purposes, and aims are not always realized, but are often dishonoured in the flesh. 'It is sown in weakness.' Weakness is a relative condition and is a description, true and just, of our spiritual life while in the flesh. The spirit is often willing when the flesh is weak. 'It is sown a natural body,' and so rendered, it means that the germ of our highest spiritual nature is sown in an animal organism, and that only as that animal organism becomes less and less the dominating factor of life can the spiritual self assert itself. Clearly, then, the sowing time in this argument is not the time of our burial, but the time of our birth.

(2) *As all seed sown must die in order to live, so must we die in order to live.* Now here again the Apostle cannot be thinking of the dissolution of body and spirit. What we call dying, the Scriptures usually speak of as falling asleep, or as 'the time of our departure.' And it is what we call our living that the New Testament calls over and over again our 'dying.' Rightly viewed, our whole life in the flesh should be one long process of dying—dying to sin, the world, and self. And so we read in this very context, 'I protest by that glorying in you . . . which I have in Christ Jesus . . . I die daily' (ver. 31). How perfect the analogy! When you put your grain of wheat into the soil, the chemical elements in the soil begin at once to operate upon the outward form and to break it up: it begins to 'die.' Then the hidden germ, exposed to the light and heat and moisture, springs up gradually into shape and consistency. Its daily dying and its daily rising go on together, the one being essential to the other. So as we in our physical body die, the spirit is quickened and rises into shape and beauty. Here we get a hint of the resurrection body. It is within us even now in germ; not in the flesh and blood we carry, but in the spirit we evolve.

(3) *As the bare grain is clothed with a new body, so shall we be*—with bodies of transcendent glory. 'God giveth it a body.' Even of the seed it is true that it is God who 'giveth it a body.' Has modern science or philosophy any other explanation to offer? Are we not as far to-day as ever from explaining the wonder and mystery of life and the marvel of its distinct types? The biologist tells us that under the microscope there is no observable difference between the protoplasm from which there is built up a man and the protoplasm from which there comes the tree or the beast. Yet the difference is there. Wheat produces wheat, birds produce birds, and man is begotten only of man. 'God giveth it a body even as it pleased him, and to each seed a body of its own.'

And so to us God giveth a body, as it pleaseth Him. Let it be the outcome of long processes of evolution, yet it is His gift to us for our life on earth. 'And there is a spiritual body,' which, too, is His gift, if it be quickened and developed by processes of spiritual evolution. Is the full corn in the ear the same body that was sown? No. It sprang from it, but it is vastly more and richer. So the new body now being quickened will be other and more than this, but it cannot be the same.

What, then, will the new body be like? Could we conceive it possible, if we did not see it, that the bare grain would shoot up into the blade, the ear, and the full corn? So the conditions of our future life will be other than those of the present, and the body that God will give us will be conformed to the Body of our Lord's glory. We know not what we shall be, but we shall be like Him. Retaining our own individuality, in the risen life we shall share the common glory of our risen Lord and Pattern.

¶ The most touching letter in Mrs Evans' volume[1] is one of a series addressed to her dead husband.

She describes to the departed spirit her visit to his grave. The chapel was empty, a Bible lying open on the pulpit at First Corinthians xv.

'I never felt that passage as I did then. I almost spoke it aloud through tears of fear and hope. At the verse, "And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other *grain*. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." I suddenly remembered a day we stood together at San Pedro, and you were so interested in the tender wheat which seemed to stretch, a great plain of green, to the mountains. For the first time I saw the beauty of it. Like a flash I thought of your dear body as the little grain you have so often held in

[1] *The Rosalie Evans Letters from Mexico.*

your hand and shown me with pride to prove what splendid wheat San Pedro could produce. Yes, it was buried—hidden from the warm sun and fresh air many days before it became the moving green blade that sprang up from it. So, too, I believe your celestial body may have risen.'

2. *The General Use of the Apostle's Method of Argument.* — This law operates in many spheres.

(1) Let us take the sowing and resurrection of Church life. Our Divine Lord did not shape a Church and give us for ever a definite ecclesiastical polity from which we were never to swerve. And for a very sufficient reason. The Church was intended to be a living organism and not a mechanical structure. So what the Master did was to sow the bare grain. That grain was quickened in the apostolic days by the Holy Spirit's power, and it has been growing ever since. Of course, the body is to-day far other than what it was centuries back, for the shell has been subjected to processes of disintegration, and its latent life has been working itself out. God gives His Church, from age to age, a body as it pleases Him, and not as it pleases popes and priests and ecclesiastical assemblies. The old bare grain has rotted, but the Church is not dead. To all timid souls, fearful of changes and future developments, St Paul's word is: 'Thou foolish one,' be content that your Church life of to-day shall be the seed of a more glorious, richer, and fuller Church which is yet to come.

(2) Or take the sowing and resurrection of truth, which also is quickened only through death.

Truth, whether of morals, philosophy, science, or religion, is seed, and has within it latent life. But in order that the life may work, the seed must be sown. The very Bible is an illustration of this principle. The New Testament is the body which it pleased God to give to the bare grain of Old Testament revelation. So, in its turn, the New Testament is a collection of seeds ever bearing varied and richer fruit. To wish to bind men down to the speech of any past age is like asking them to live on chaff and to refuse the fresh-grown wheat of to-day. Yet so it is. Men are often more anxious for the bare grains of other days than for the new and God-given body of to-day.

New times demand new measures and new men;
The world advances, and in time outgrows
The laws that in our fathers' day were best;
And, doubtless, after us, some purer scheme
Will be shaped out by wiser men than we,
Made wiser by the steady growth of truth.[1]

Then, if we have any seed of truth, let us sow it. Kept in the basket of our intellect, it will simply exist: it will not quicken or increase. Fling it out, scatter it far and wide, let it fall into the soil of human thought and love. And remember that in this it is pre-eminently true: 'There is that scattereth, and increaseth yet more.'

And, having sown the seed, do not expect to see it again. Be content if it shall die. The farmer does not expect his grains to be seen again! But we, foolish creatures, because we do not hear our own thoughts repeated, and even our own phrases, are apt to think that all real thought and faith are dying out. Rather let us expect ourselves to see new growths and hear new puttings of the truth. Do not conclude that the fresher and larger utterances of to-day are less God's truth than the thoughts and words of earlier generations.

Let us believe in the resurrection of the dead, not as a doctrine which concerns 'some far-off divine event,' but as a law of the great universe which is conceived in Him who is Himself the Resurrection and the Life. Christ is risen, and, because He lives, we and our thoughts and works that are conceived and wrought in Him shall live also, and shall live eternally.

Body and Spirit

1 Cor. xv. 44.—'It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.'

Why did St Paul in this fifteenth chapter of the first letter to the Corinthians argue so strongly in favour of the doctrine of the resurrection of a spiritual body? What was the sort of erroneous teaching that he was combating? Why is he not content merely to affirm the immortality of the soul? Because he was fighting with all the strength of his being against a partial immortality. The whole man is to be redeemed.

[1] Lowell.

But we must keep in mind that the Apostle never teaches the resurrection of the flesh. He says definitely in the words of our text: sown a natural body; raised a spiritual body. When a body is laid in the grave, Nature sets to work to dissolve it, to take down the outworn fabric and to rebuild it into other forms new and strange. It does not destroy it, it uses it up again. The particles that once made up the human body pass into other vital organisms. This physical body of ours is admirably adapted for our present material environment. For that new life, for that changed environment, we need a changed body. And such a changed body, according to the Apostle, we are to possess.

What St Paul is fighting here to uphold is the teaching of Christ as against other views of human immortality, which in the end empty that teaching of its moral force. His was essentially the struggle which, to-day, Christianity has to wage against Hinduism, and against Theosophy, which is Hinduism in western dress. When St Paul began to spread the gospel, belief in the immortality of the soul was common enough among many of the half Greek, half Oriental religious systems of the peoples of the eastern Mediterranean. Sometimes it was held among these people that immortality could be gained by magical sacraments. Some philosophers taught that the essential thing in man was, as it were, a bit of Divine substance, which, because it was Divine, could not perish.

Now, St Paul, as against such ideas, relied on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ our Lord, and he asserted that such beliefs were, to say the least, dangerously inadequate. He could not regard any doctrine of immortality satisfactory which did not assert a complete survival of personality—such a survival of our present personality as carries with it moral responsibility for deeds done in this our present life. The soul, so the Apostle has learnt from Christ, is not some essential Divine element in man, which will return to God as the stream flows into the ocean, but our complete personality, made or marred by our conduct here, fit or unfit for eternal life in the presence of God according as we have been in our earthly life true or false to the example and teaching of Christ. After death we shall have what the Apostle could only describe as a spiritual body—something which would enable us to retain our personality. With us, after death, memory of the earthly life will remain, and responsibility for sins committed here will remain. The consequence of struggle to serve God and to follow Christ will also remain.

¶ Even in this world the outward appearance of the body is to some extent modified by the life of the soul within, which profoundly affects both its general health and vigour and the expression of the face and carriage. But if we accept, in any degree at all, the view that the 'spiritual' body of the next life will be one which will be a more perfect organ than is our present body for the expression of the spirit, then in the next world the body will no longer be able to disguise, it will, on the contrary, perfectly reveal the personality. The body will be fair or foul, strong or weak, according as would best express the character of the person it serves. It will bear on it scars, indeed, but they will be the scars of self-inflicted moral wounds rather than of physical wounds inflicted from without—these latter may often be the nail-prints of a cross, transfigured into lines of ineffable beauty. That new body will automatically 'bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart'—either for glory or for shame.[1]

¶ What Professor Palmer of Harvard wrote, with fine restraint, when he recorded his wife's decease, we instinctively feel about the whole prospect of personality's annihilation: 'Though no regrets are proper for the manner of her death, who can contemplate the fact of it and not call the world irrational, if out of deference to a few particles of disordered matter it excludes so fair a spirit?' If death ends personality, the universe seems to be throwing away with utter heedlessness its most precious possessions.[2]

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure.

He fixed thee mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest:

[1] B. H. Streeter, in *Immortality*.
[2] H. E. Fosdick, *The Assurance of Immortality*, 8.

Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

. . . . . .

Look not thou down but up:
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips aglow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what need'st thou with earth's wheel? [1]

This was St Paul's doctrine of the Resurrection. It was ethical; it was personal. In the philosophic ideas of immortality which he rejected there was little incentive to moral conduct. It was assumed that the stream, however muddy, would ultimately flow into the ocean; every soul would ultimately be joined to an impersonal God. To St Paul this was false philosophy, as abhorrent as the materialism which assumes that at death we cease to exist. Further, he regarded the magic which pretended to confer eternal life by ritual, fasts, and purifications as foolishness. Faith in Christ showing itself in Christian conduct was for the Apostle the means whereby man enters the Kingdom of Heaven. It is not, perhaps, easy to realize at first the immense importance of the truths for which St Paul contended. The ideas which he opposed have always been attractive to the Arian races. We, like the Greeks and Hindus, are Arians. Perhaps it will make the issue more plain if we look at modern Hinduism in a simple manner, and then see how and why it is inferior to the teaching which we get from Christ and from St Paul.

The Hindu thinks of God as impersonal, pure being, the sum of all that really exists, and he believes that individual souls are essentially identical with this Absolute. Christ, on the other hand, taught that God is personal—our Father in Heaven, the living Creator of the Universe. Man, moreover, is not Divine; he was created to become a Son of God; through loving service to God he can put on immortality. His personality can become so purified by goodness, by truth, by beauty that he can gain eternal life in the presence of God. Such are the great fundamental differences. But, further, the Hindu believes in constant rebirth. He pictures the soul as a solitary pilgrim wandering through many stages of existence before it reaches the final goal. Each rebirth he imagines to be the consequence of works done in the previous existence. Evil acts may even cause a soul to enter the body of some despised animal. The cycle continues indefinitely until release comes. This occurs when the soul by quietness and contemplation has realized its identity with the Supreme. The end, then, is Nirvana.

This doctrine implies that the universe is unreal and delusive, and human life with its moral struggle is deemed to belong to a phantom universe. And what now is the contrary teaching of Christ? We are born once, and once only upon earth. Our life here is no illusion; it is real—a moral and spiritual struggle whose issue determines the future. God watches over that struggle, but will help us if we seek His help. And the heavenly life is not Nirvana; it is life in a spiritual body. Or, as we now put the matter, it is the enrichment of all the finest activities of our present existence. Or, if we want the simplest sentence—it is the life active through love. Now, surely our Christian view is the more inspiring and the more reasonable. We know nothing of any past existence. The doctrine of rebirth is pure phantasy, and the doctrine of illusion is pure scepticism.

Of course it may be said, it often is said, that we know nothing of life beyond the grave; and some will argue: 'Is it not, like the doctrine of rebirth which the Christian rejects, the product of mere phantasy?' To that we must answer 'No.' If rebirth be a fact, memory is lost at death, personality is thereby dissociated. I am not myself without my memory. The self we have made by trying to serve God is disintegrated. But the making of that self is surely the ultimate object of our earthly pilgrimage. Either our active life has no ultimate meaning, or, in so far as we have transformed ourselves by what may be called Divine qualities, we have, in St Paul's language, put on immortality. We have passed, to use his words, from weakness to power; and when the natural body dissolves, the spiritual body created by moral and spiritual struggle shall remain.

¶ The present life is the first stage of the future ever-during life. Strength, beauty,

[1] Browning, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.

dignity, loveliness, delight, may be added, but added only to what we are, never to what we are not. What we essentially are in this world, that we shall be in the other; what here we absolutely are not, we shall not be there.[1]

We have seen that, as in St Paul's age so in ours, there are two quite different views as to the nature of immortality. With them are associated different estimates of God, different ideas of the importance of the moral life. As against false views—that God is impersonal, that man is essentially Divine, that human life is an illusion—we set Christ's teaching—that God is a loving Father, that man is potentially fit for eternal life in His presence, and that human life as we know it is the battlefield on which by moral and spiritual struggle eternal life is gained. We must assert and continue to assert that man is born into the world in order that his soul, his personality, may be so enriched by the spirit of Christ that he becomes in the full sense of the word a son of God, joint-heir with Christ of the Kingdom of Heaven. In the scheme of thought which with St Paul we reject, time is assumed to be unreal; activity in time is assumed to be ultimately valueless. We follow Christ in believing that time is real, that God through men works in time—works to create spirits that shall love Him. We do not say that God Himself is in time. Time is in Him; it flows from Him, and He uses it to make of His servants, of us, righteous men in this world and sons of His household in the world to come.

The Incarnation and Human Life

1 Cor. xv. 45.—'The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.' (R.V.)

1. *The Incarnation and Human Nature.*—The Incarnation is a great revelation of God. It declares what God is in His essential Being. It reveals His redeeming passion and His love. The Incarnation did not create that passion and love. They were in God all the time. Love is His nature; Father is His everlasting name; but His love and His Fatherhood were both hidden till Christ came. The Incarnation declared them and made them manifest. It is in it we perceive the essential dignity and greatness of human nature—it was great enough to contain the Eternal Son of God. One of the best theological treatises ever written was that by Anselm on the question, 'Why did God become a man?' That led Anselm at once to the discussion of sin and of atonement. But there is a question just as vital and important which concerns the Incarnation itself, and it is this, 'How did God become a man?'

The answer to that question is this, that God could incarnate Himself in man because there was an essential kinship between the human and the Divine. Augustine says, and says quite truly, that the Divine became human in order that the human might become Divine. But this also is true (and to that extent Augustine's saying needs to be supplemented and corrected), that the Divine was able to become human only because the human already partook of the nature of the Divine. For, like God, man is a moral personality. Of course there had to be a great self-emptying on the part of God to become a man. But the possibility of Incarnation was present because man was a moral personality like Himself. God could not incarnate Himself in stars and suns, vast though they are, for stars and suns are just masses of unthinking, unfeeling matter. But He could incarnate Himself in man because man was a thinking, feeling, willing, moral being. The ground of the Incarnation is the great truth that God and man are essentially akin. This is the representation of man that we get in the Bible. When God had finished the work of creation, according to the old Genesis story, He said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'

The final proof of the greatness of human nature lies here—it is such a nature that the eternal Son of God could use it and wear it and inhabit it. And it was the birth at Bethlehem that made all this obvious and clear. It did not create the greatness of human nature; it revealed it—revealed it so intrinsically and essentially sacred and Divine a thing that the Son of God could become a man, a real man, and yet be the eternal Son all the time. The Incarnation has ennobled and glorified human nature. 'The true Shekinah of God is man,' said Carlyle. But the Apostle Paul had already said the same thing in simpler but still sublimer fashion when he said, 'Know ye not that ye are

[1] Christina G. Rossetti.

the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?'

¶ The Incarnation of the Son of God has not left human nature where it was, but imported into it a new Divine splendour. Wonderful as man was in his created likeness to God, the entrance of the Son of God into the vital body of humanity has raised human nature to a higher point than it ever attained before. This, like the Incarnation itself, is as difficult to define as it is clearly a fact. When 'the Word became flesh, and dwelt among men,' the measurements of humanity had to be taken from a new height, even from the glory of the Son of Man.[1]

But it exceeds man's thought, to think how high
God hath raised Man, since God a man became;
The angels do admire this mystery,
And are astonished when they view the same.

Nor hath He given these blessings for a day,
Nor made them on the body's life depend;
The Soul, though made in time, survives for aye;
And though it hath beginning, sees no end.[2]

This truth about the essential greatness and sacredness of human nature is certainly no 'mere doctrine.' It has the most direct and potent influence upon life. If you think meanly of a thing, you can never do justice by it. Mean thoughts of human nature will lead directly to mean uses of it. And there are certain things that tend to make us think meanly of it.

(1) There is first our accentuated and deepened sense of the insignificance of man as compared with the vastness of the universe. This planet, which men used to believe was the centre of the universe, and the inhabitants thereof, at least possibly, the apple of its Creator's eye, we now know to be but a speck amid infinite systems of worlds; and we are, therefore, scornfully asked if it be not but an insanity to imagine that the Infinite Cause whose universe is in endless space has taken the likeness of creatures of one of the most infinitesimal of His worlds, and has 'dwelt among us.' Now this is simply an attempt to terrorize the imagination, and is not to be yielded to. We know little or nothing of the rest of the universe, and it may very well be that in no other planet but this is there intelligent and moral life; and, if that be so, then this world, despite its material insignificance, would remain the real summit of creation. But even if this be not so, still man remains man—a spiritual being, capable of knowing, loving, and glorifying God. Man is that, be there what myriads of worlds there may; and is not less that, though in other worlds were also beings like him.[1]

Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul?[2]

(2) And if, on the one hand, the contrast between the universe and the individual makes us think poorly of human nature—so also do the things we see in man himself. For human nature as we see it in actual experience is often debased and degraded. There are human beings who inspire us with nothing but aversion and disgust. Our temptation is to despise all such and despair of them. But, if we either despise or despair of them, we shall be wholly unable to save and redeem them. We shall do with them as the Pharisees did with the publicans and sinners of their day—leave them to perish. The only way in which we shall be able to do our duty by the lapsed and the lost is to look at them in the light of the Incarnation. They, too, are *capax Dei*, able to receive and contain God. Christ may be born again in them. Realizing that about them we shall despise none and despair of none.

¶ An anæmic, flirtatious group passed us, the girls in front, the boys behind.

'Good God, Campion,' says Simon, 'what *can* you do?'

'Pity them, old chap,' he returned quickly.

'What's the good of that?'

'Good? Oh, I see.' He laughed with a touch of scorn. 'It's a question of definition. When you see a fellow-creature suffering and it shocks your refined sensibilities and you say "poor devil," and pass on, you think you have pitied him. But you haven't. You think pity's a passive virtue. But it isn't. If you really pity anybody, you go mad to help him.

[1] J. Thomas, *The Mysteries of Grace*, 24.
[2] Sir John Davies.

[1] P. Carnegie Simpson. [2] Tennyson.

You don't stand by with tears of sensibility running down your cheeks. You stretch out your hand because you've got to. If he won't take it, or wipes you over the head, that's his look-out. You can't work miracles. But once in a way he does take it, and then—well, you work with all your might to pull him through. And if you do, what bigger thing is there in the world than the salvation of a human soul?' [1]

2. *The Incarnation and Human Relationships.*—Our Lord did not come into the world as a detached and isolated Person. He was a second Adam—a new starting-point for the race. But He was not unrelated with that portion of the race which preceded Him. In a real way He derived from it, He was a shoot out of the stock of Jesse; He was of the house and lineage of David; He was born the son of Mary; He entered into the various relationships of life; He began by being a little child in the home; He was subject to His parents; He was a pupil in the school of Nazareth; He was an elder brother to a number of brothers and sisters; He filled His place in the community; He paid His taxes; He was a loyal citizen of His State. And in all these relations—these everyday human relations—He was the Holy Son of God. By becoming Incarnate and living our life, Christ has shown how holy and sacred all these relationships can be made. He did not make them sacred by entering into them—but by entering into them He revealed to us how great and sacred and beautiful they are when rightly discharged. But they are often enough the very reverse of sacred and beautiful. There is friction where there ought to be harmony; selfishness where there ought to be loving service; rebellion where there ought to be glad obedience. Life would be a different thing for multitudes of us if only we were wise and gracious parents, obedient children, unselfish and helpful brothers and sisters!

We can make our civic and state relationships sacred and Divine. Jesus paid His taxes, paid them scrupulously and honestly. 'Render to Cæsar,' He said, 'the things that are Cæsar's.' He made His very citizenship a Divine and sacred thing. And so may we. State life has become more complex since Christ's day. It touches us at more points. Our citizen relationship is a sacred relationship. Our obligations to the State are not to be evaded; they are to be punctiliously and cheerfully discharged. And perhaps there is nothing we need more at such a time as this than the exaltation of our whole conception of citizenship. In the discharge of our State responsibilities we can act as children of God.

¶ Every election should be a religious service, an act by which the people are brought into relation with the Most High and an opportunity for the surrender of self-will to the Divine will. Many of us remember Carlyle's account of the election of Abbot Samson of St Edmundsbury, how the voters, with their eyes on the Sacro Sancta, and with their hands on the Gospels, and to the sound of the Psalm, 'Give ear, O Lord, to my words and my meditation weigh,' chose their Ruler. 'This,' adds Carlyle, 'is the ballot-box and electoral winnowing machine they have at St Edmundsbury; a mind fixed on the Thrice Holy, an appeal to God on high to witness their meditation; by far the best and indeed only winnowing machine, if men have souls within them. . . . And without a soul what winnowing machine in human elections can be of avail?' An election now, as at St Edmund's Monastery, should be the service of the Thrice Holy.[1]

3. *The Incarnation and Daily Toil.*—The Incarnation has glorified and ennobled all our human labour. For fifteen years Jesus was in the carpenter's shop and worked at the carpenter's trade. And all the time while He was mending ploughs and chairs, and building the houses of the people of Nazareth, He was in His Father's house and about His Father's business. Was it not to show the glory and divineness of all labour that Jesus entered the carpenter's home? Amongst the Romans and Greeks especially all manual toil was despised, and was largely left to the slave. Now, if Jesus had been born as a member, say, of the professional classes, that pernicious heresy might have endured and become more and more widespread, and the countless millions who toil with their hands might have thought their labour was a profane and almost contemptible thing. But our Lord redeemed those tasks we think humble from any touch of secularity by Himself becoming a carpenter.

[1] W. J. Locke, *Simon the Jester.*

[1] S. A. Barnett, *Religion and Politics*, 168.

¶ There is a familiar little poem which seeks to express the feelings of an old joiner at finding Jesus was a carpenter :—

'Isn't this Joseph's son?'—ay, it is He;
Joseph the carpenter—same trade as me—
I thought as I'd find it—I knew it was here—
But my sight's getting queer.

I don't know right where, as His shed must ha' stood,
But often, as I've been a-planing my wood,
I've took off my hat, just with thinking of He
At the same work as me.

He warn't that set up that He couldn't stoop down
And work in the country for folks in the town;
And I'll warrant He felt a bit pride, like I've done,
At a good job begun.

So I comes right away by mysen, with the book,
And I turns the old pages and has a good look
For the text as I've found, as tells me as He
Were the same trade as me.

There is a story told that an artist—humble and unknown—after gazing at one of the great pictures of one of the Master Painters, was overheard to say in a kind of ecstasy, 'I too am an artist.' After gazing at Jesus, we too may well be moved to cry with gratitude and wonder, 'I too am a man.' For what the Incarnation has taught us is this, that every son of man may become a son of God.

The Divine Order

1 Cor. xv. 46.—'Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.'

St Paul died long before the word 'evolution' was coined or the idea conceived; but here he avows himself the first Christian evolutionist. In these words he puts into a sentence the Christian philosophy of the universe and of man.

1. Here we find the summary of all that science and history have to teach us: first that which is natural, afterward that which is spiritual. If we could unroll the folded leaves of Time, we should see how true this is of the process which is called physical evolution.

¶ H. G. Wells in his story *The Time Machine*, gives us an imaginary picture of the illimitable ages of the past in a rapid survey. He dreamt that by touching a lever in this machine he was able to make Time go backward, so that he could recapitulate the course of the world's history from the beginning. What he really saw was the probable line of development as scientific men have slowly built it up by reading the records of the rocks and of the stars.

We have the same outline on a grander scale in the first chapter of the Bible. The formless void; the birth of light on the welter of chaos; the separation of material elements into sun and planets, sky and earth, sea and land, day and night; the birth of life, vegetable and animal; the slow appearance of the organic world as we know it in an ever-ascending series of complexity and efficiency; and at last man, an earthly creature, who was also a living spirit.

Yes, the spiritual is built upon the natural. Food must be there before digestion can begin; lips and tongue must come before speech and song; the canvas must be prepared before you can paint your picture; the brain must be fashioned ere the mind can think; the body of man must be prepared before the soul can realize itself within it.

And then St Paul here makes a further distinction. Man's life is twofold. There is a lower and a higher in him too, as there is in the universe outside him. There is the natural man, the man who sees and feels, enjoys pleasure, suffers pain, follows his own will, realizes himself as part of the earthly organic order. And there is the spiritual man, who has a sense of right and wrong, who can see an ideal and pursue it. Adam comes before Christ.

¶ The man of the garden, untrained, undisciplined, self-indulgent, incapable of self-control, comes before the Man of the Cross, who willingly surrenders the present for the future, the body for the soul, and Himself for others.[1]

This order of things explains a mystery which often troubles us—and that is why the natural is so strong and the spiritual is so weak in us. It is because the natural man came first. He was long in possession of the field before the

[1] Phillips Brooks.

other appeared on the scene, and he had intrenched himself in the strength of his passions and the lordly power of his appetites. It is the law of life that its beginnings are inconceivably faint and weak, and that it comes to itself through struggle and pain and partial failure. And that is how the spiritual life has come. How faint and feeble must have been its first strivings in those men of the far-off days who first began to feel its trembling flame awakening into a glow in their half-animal lives. The wonder is that it was not crushed out of being long, long ago; that man did not fall back into a contented animal instead of slowly finding the life of the spirit permeating the life of the flesh, till with the coming of the Son of God—the Second Adam, the Man from Heaven—it was for the first time in full possession of the field.

2. What are the right relations of these two men in us—the natural and the spiritual? According to St Paul, the natural exists for the spiritual; the spiritual crowns and finds his opportunity in the conquest of the natural.

(1) *The natural exists for the spiritual.* Judging by the way in which the natural man resists and rebels against the spiritual, this is not at all self-evident. 'The natural man,' says the Apostle, 'receiveth not the things of the spirit.' The coming of the spiritual heralds a state of war, not of welcome. Its demands are resisted, its authority is spurned. And so the spiritual can take possession and come to its own only by conquest.

The term 'natural man' is ambiguous. It means, first, the animal nature illumined by self-conscious mind. If this were all, there would be no ostensible reason why the spiritual man should not take possession of the natural just as the seed does the unresisting soil, and realize himself by assimilation. But the natural man is not pure nature; something (according to the Bible account of his nature) has happened to him: an anti-spiritual element is already in possession of the field; he is under the dominance of evil. Call it what we will, something has gone wrong, and needs to be put right. And this it is that accounts for the conflict. 'When I would do good, then is evil present with me.'

None the less is the natural man meant for the uses of the spiritual man. We are made, not for evil, but for good; not for sin, but for righteousness; not for self-indulgence, which leads to ruin, but for self-conquest, which leads to fuller life. No man comes to himself till the natural elements in him have been redeemed and made the willing servant of the spiritual.

(2) Or put it in another way, the *spiritual finds its opportunity by the conquest of the natural.* The theology which, in endeavouring to exalt the spiritual threw contempt on the natural life, sinned against the God who made the natural as well as the spiritual. It is only the natural as degraded by sin that we should denounce. The natural man is but the physical passions, and aptitudes, and emotions, the power to think, to feel, to act, to purpose, to accomplish. It is that in us which enables us to enjoy food, light, music, the companionships and attachments of this earthly social order. It is the faculties by which alone the spiritual can realize itself in this world of sense and time. Without the spiritual to uplift and use it, the natural man is an unfinished product, an organ without a musician, a body without a soul.

Two mistakes have been made in the relation of the natural and the spiritual which have had disastrous effects in the world's history. There is the mistake of the worldly man who poohpoohs religion, and thinks it a weak and silly thing. He believes in letting the natural man have his way; he indulges his passions, lives for pleasure, thinks he is in this world to have what he calls 'a good time,' which generally means a bad time for some one else. To this man the spiritual order is a foolishness, a thing to mock at or to neglect; and his punishment is that he becomes incapable of entering into any high conception even of the natural life, and misses altogether the possibilities of the spiritual life. Sometimes it leads to tragic ruin of body as well as soul, but always to a life cramped, selfish, reckless, miserable.

¶ The gods had given me almost everything. But I let myself be lured into long spells of senseless and sensual ease. I amused myself with being a *flâneur*, a dandy, a man of fashion. I surrounded myself with the smaller natures and the meaner minds. I became the spendthrift of my own genius, and to waste an eternal youth gave me a curious joy. . . . I took pleasure where it pleased me, and passed on. I forgot that every little action of the common day makes or unmakes character, and that therefore what one has done in the secret

chamber one has some day to cry aloud from the house-top. I ceased to be lord over myself. I was no longer the captain of my soul, and did not know it. I allowed pleasure to dominate me. I ended in horrible disgrace.[1]

On the other hand there is the mistake of the religious man who thinks that the only way to subdue the 'natural man' is to override and ignore him. It is here that the ascetic goes wrong, and all those who do violence to the body and its needs, thinking that so they honour the soul. It is not by crushing either body or soul that the true life can be attained. It is by giving each its rightful place in the complex life. The right place for the spiritual man is to be the inspirer as well as the ruler of the natural man, and the right place for the natural man is to be the willing instrument and obedient servant of the spiritual. Cleanse the heart of sin, and the whole man becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit.

3. In society as well as in the individual there is the sphere of the natural and the sphere of the spiritual; and there is a social salvation as well as a spiritual. How, then, is society to be reformed? Here again there are two ideals and two methods.

(1) There is *the way of the religious reformer* who says it can only be done by regenerating every individual in it. There is a great truth here, but in its bare form it leads to error. If you follow it out literally to the neglect of the social factor, you will never get beyond a certain point in the reformation and cleansing and sweetening of society. As a matter of fact, this doctrine has been preached in this country ever since the Reformation; since that time we might almost say it has been in possession of the field. And what has been the result? The result has been a succession of splendid Christian men and women in English society who have been the salt of the nation, who have kept the land from hopeless corruption from generation to generation. They have been earnest, pure, Christ-like, and full of passion for the salvation of men. But they have not succeeded in Christianizing society; they have not purified it from its foul vices and its social abuses; they have failed to keep our cities from being overcrowded and the poor from being oppressed. This Christian country is still a good place to sin in, but a difficult place to repent in; and many a man who means well is early dragged down to ruin because the social temptations around him are too many and strong for his power of resistance. The spiritual cannot save men by ignoring or suppressing the natural in society any more than in the individual.

(2) Then there is the opposite ideal—*the ideal of the social reformer pure and simple,* whose motto is that men are all right if only you can make their social conditions all right. This is the creed of the anarchist, who identifies the principle of evil with human government; of the socialist, who says 'redistribute the world's wealth, and you will ensure the millennium'; and in a less crude form it is the creed of the man who thinks he can reform everything by legislation. But neither will this work by itself. Every ideal community that was ever formed has failed, and for the same reason—that without renewing the individual members of society you can never for long have a renewed society. Old evils will reappear under another form, new evils will come to light, and the ancient poison which is at work in the veins of the natural man will break out into fresh social diseases that will baffle preacher and statesman as before. The time has come for the Christian Church to rise to the full scheme of human redemption by attacking the evil from both sides at once.

¶ When of William Wilberforce's fight against the slave traffic it can be said: 'The clergy to a man are favourable to the cause,' and 'the people have taken up the matter in the view of duty and religion, and do not inquire what any man or set of men think of it,' then come great days to the Church. For great days never can come to the Church except as she shares the spirit of her Lord, and her Lord's demand was not simply new men in an old world, but a new world to house new men.[1]

[1] Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis.*

Natural Religion

1 Cor. xv. 46.—'Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.'

In the New Testament as a whole we find an absence of the kind of sentiment which we desire, say, on a day of harvest thanksgiving, to create and to express. It cannot be *wrong*

[1] H. E. Fosdick, *The Meaning of Service,* 38.

to raise our thanksgiving to God for the ordinances of nature; it cannot be wrong to praise Him whom we believe to be behind the process of the seasons. It is surely a religious exercise to yield for a little while to an instinct as old as our human nature, and to lift up our song to the mysterious Goodness by whose grace and at whose table we live. And yet on a fair reading of the New Testament we should be bound to admit that this particular point of view is not made much of. It is not altogether absent. We feel that the happy souls of the New Testament lived regularly in the attitude of thanksgiving, that they saw everything, even the dark things, within the love of God. Nevertheless, seldom if ever do they approach God by the way of nature; seldom if ever do they come at religious ideas or religious feelings from the starting-point of the general goodness of God in the natural world. The nearest approach to natural theology in the New Testament is probably the speech of St Paul to the Athenians on Mars Hill; and St Paul was quick to see that there he had failed.

¶ The Christian propaganda failed or prospered in proportion as the fresh data for religion present in Jesus were studiously concealed or openly proclaimed. A striking instance is St Paul's address at Athens. Doubtless it sheds light on problems which had baffled heathen wisdom. In place of gods, who are really men, the Apostle speaks of the transcendent spirituality to be ascribed to the one only true God; a God afar off he replaces by One in whom we live and move and have our being; primal chaos yields to Divine creation; history read as a confused welter of chance or fate takes the aspect of Providence guiding each race and people to its goal; instead of the proud distinction of Greek and barbarian is set the vast compassionate truth that all men are one in nature and blood. But at no point is publicity given to the distinctive Christian message; and (if the speech be authentic) it is neither priggish nor fanciful to find in this studied omission of the Cross an explanation alike of St Paul's comparative failure in Athens and his subsequent change of front at Corinth.[1]

It was only when the Apostle moved on to his proper ground and declared that this great God was no mere general sunshine lying all over things, but a Living Being who was now come right into the midst of them—God in Action—it was only then that they turned away. In short, the moment he unveiled Christ and declared God personal, the Athenians turned to go. The Apostle had touched them.

¶ A Brahman came to me confidentially one day and said, 'Your addresses have been very much enjoyed, but there is one thing I would suggest. If you will preach Christ as *a* way, all right, but say that there may be other ways as well. If you do this, India will be at your feet.'[1]

1. Now this aversion from the preaching of mere nature has from time to time seized the Church. It is as though the Church, having tried to bring her supernatural language and habits into harmony with the speech and ideas of ordinary mankind, so that she might penetrate that speech and elevate those ideas, discovered one day that the world which she was hoping to affect for God was entangling her, and taking the supernatural quality out of her testimony; that, instead of her annexing the world for God, the world was annexing her and accommodating her to itself. It is *then* that a mood of severity has passed over the Church, leading faithful people to separate themselves even violently from the ordinary ways of human living. And so we have such great reactions as asceticism and monasticism and puritanism, with their buffetings of the body, with their suspicion of mere natural beauty and adornment, with their severity of speech, with their unworldliness, and, in the days of their birth, the wonder and cleanness of the souls they produce.

This tendency to react against the merely natural life, and against the merely natural way of interpreting life, is a tendency which masters the Church at such regular intervals, and in such similar circumstances that we may safely say that it is an inevitable thing. And, if so, we must believe that all this happens at the time in obedience to something in the Christian soul which is crying out for such a discipline; beginning for some reason to be afraid for itself, afraid of its surroundings, afraid that it was about to lose its hold on God. And so it could not be reassured until it had put a

[1] H. R. Mackintosh, *The Originality of the Christian Message*, 23.

[1] E. Stanley Jones, *The Christ of the Indian Road*, 64.

distance between itself and the things which were making it afraid.

2. How do we account, then, for the suspicion of nature which was part of the piety of our fathers, which manifested itself in personal severity and plainness, and in the rejection of mere natural beauty or form from the things of God? It is simply stupid to put it down to ignorance, or to any idea which a clever young person can point out. Rather is it something in the human soul which hungers and thirsts for the very thing which it repudiates.

In this rejection of any alliance with nature, which has been an invincible mood of the Christian soul, it is possible to see two great fears, two great precautions. When the early Church rejected that style of teaching which St Paul tried for once in Athens; when the Church denounced all complicity with natural law or natural beauty—the instinct was, we must hold, a right instinct, and it arose as a protest against two things, as a safeguard against two possibilities. It was in each case a precaution against, first, *immorality*, and, second, against *an easy acquiescence in things as they are*. These, indeed, are two real dangers which threaten us when we leave our proper ground, which is the God of the Holy Scriptures, the Christ of the New Testament and of history, and think to find guidance for our lives in the processes of the natural world.

(1) Anything approaching the worship of God in nature has always been accompanied by a slackening of those moral restraints which are necessary for man's true life. The danger of talking much about nature is that the idea gains upon us that nature and human nature are alike, which, according to Christianity, is the very opposite of the truth. Nature-worship has always become degraded. The world was full of it when Christ came. And it was not a thing to be expected that the first preachers of the gospel should even appear to have anything in common with rites and ceremonies which were only ministering to the licence and naturalism of mankind. The symbol of nature-worship was always something sensuous and overflowing; the symbol of Christianity is a Cross.

And it is the same instinct of fear which has operated through the ages in the Church. Human nature is something altogether different from mere nature; and the true God comes to us not as we consider idly the general fruitfulness of the world, but as we listen to our own private misgivings, and then lift our eyes to Him who gave Himself for our redemption. The danger of all nature-teaching is that it puts away the Cross, and no way is really safe for man that is not marked with the sign of the Cross. That was one thing that put the Christian Church in an attitude of carefulness and suspicion; it was genuinely afraid that it might be caught, might lose its edge, its love of hard things and of the Cross, in the worship of mere life and fruitfulness.

(2) The other fear which was present in this instinctive prejudice against nature as an ally to faith was this—the feeling which gathers about our minds when we think exclusively of the world of nature, of sowing and reaping, of fruits and flowers, that we live in the best of all possible worlds, or, at any rate, that things are wonderfully well as they are. The moral danger of mixing up natural religion with our Christianity is that the natural religion is apt to take away from us our Christian instinct to protest against the evil in things. For we have come to the end of our Christianity when we declare that the world as we have it is well enough. The early Church could not believe that this world was simply a beautiful and innocent place; for in this world and by this world Jesus Christ the Son of God had been put to a shameful death. At the back of all their doctrines was this steady and unfaltering conviction, that the world as we have it was a thing to be denounced and to be saved. And that is not Christianity which is without the passion to rebuke the terrible evil in things. Christianity is not based upon the belief that 'all's right with the world.' It is not a truce; it is a declaration of war. Christ came not to bring peace, but a sword. And these are the stirring, redeeming things we believe and declare.

How numbing it is to all our heroic faculties to be told that all is well; to be told that there is nothing to work for, if need be to die for. How untrue to have some one tell us that things as they are are well when we know that they are not well, when we know that we ourselves are wrong, and hold that, if we were never to become better than we are, we should have failed. Christianity is not optimism, nor

is it pessimism; it is faith in God—in the good in things, and a protest against the evil in things. It is because much talking about nature and her bountifulness is apt to produce this idle acquiescence in things as they are, because it is apt to lower the Cross as the one flag of this life of ours, that, from time to time, the Church took another course and adopted another form of speech.

We believe to-day that Christ does permit to us acts of public thanksgiving for the bountifulness of nature, without endangering our souls. We believe that we can keep the proportion of faith. We know that though we thank God for the harvest and for the natural goods of life, we do not talk of seeing God in the harvest. We see God in the passion of love of His Son. It is only when we see God in Christ, it is only when we know the heart of things to be a cross, that we can see God in the natural world, and yet not slacken in our protest against the evil in our own hearts and against the ancient evils of the world.

The Victory over Death

1 Cor. xv. 55.—'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?'

1. As we gaze over the vast accumulation of human beings gathered into our crowded cities the thought comes over us at times with a sense of horrible panic that every one of them has to die. It sounds incredible. They look so unlike it. They are running to and fro, thick with endless businesses and activities. There they are, thousands upon thousands, bustling, talking, swearing, laughing. They suggest anything and everything except the silence and the solemnity of death. Nothing in them leads up to it; nothing is getting ready, it would seem. The life goes on, and must of necessity, out of sheer stress of work, leave death out of account. What swarms upon swarms flit to and fro, in and out, before our dazed eyes, as we peep down dim streets and queer passages and dirty courts; and still there are ever more and more. And each and all will be aware suddenly of a touch laid upon them, of a dark shadow that falls, of a hand that draws them aside, of a dumb fate that envelops.

In face of these numbers of dying people, the thought of death comes rather to dignify and to enthrone. For many it is life that is mean, life that is insignificant. There is nothing to mark out one from another. Each is but a sample, a unit in a heap. Life has brought them no singular honour; they do not look as if they counted for anything or would be missed. For them life is inglorious; but death singles out each one into a separate identity. For each there is this solitary pilgrimage, with its mysterious magnificence and its overmastering awe. Each will have his heroic moment of fiery trial and scorching flame. The hour will arrive; the hour heroic and sublime of the great adventure; the hour when the particular call will sound, and all that is now so commonplace and thin will fall away, and out will step alone the soul into the dread arena, face to face with its God. Stripped and bare in its primordial verity, it will pass before the judgment of the Eternal, and the trumpet will blow, and the books will open, and the throne will be set.

For the many it is life that demeans; it is death that exalts. Life drags them down into the undistinguished ruck; death elevates all on to the high level of tragedy. And now and again, as this recognition sweeps over us, it seems as if it would be the only thing worth thinking about. Death, surely, we say, ought to be our dominant idea. In death we find ourselves, we arrive at our true significance. It ought surely to be never absent from head or heart; it ought to follow us as we rise, and sleep with us as we lie down. It ought to occupy and possess our imaginations. We ought to be stopping people in the street to repeat, like Trappist monks, the one unchanging phrase from which life derives all the meaning that it has: '*Il faut mourir.*'

2. So we just fancy, and yet as soon as we think this we are brought up short. There is nothing which so little bears thinking about in this way as death. There is nothing to be said. There is no growth in the idea. We say it, and then we say it again, and that is all that can be said: 'I am going to die.' The statement is entirely without content, without any positive significance whatever. Obviously, then, this direction of our thought upon death as the dominant fact is futile and sterile. The religion which simply takes the form of bringing death

suddenly into contrast with the buoyancy of earthly life, must always be a little limited and childish in its range. It may charm dramatically, and give a momentary solemnity to days; but it has not got to the essential form of religion. For religion is above all things a matter of life, not of death. Religion is faith in the God of life under whom all live. That is its beginning and that is its end; that is the heart of the whole matter. Therefore it was that the Israelite was taken clean away from the environment of Egypt in which religion had concentrated itself on the sole facts of death and judgment, and was taught first to leave all this dim after-world out of account, out of sight, in order that he might fasten upon the one and only supreme reality—God alive here and now. He was taught to abhor the grave and its hollow emptiness, and he was forced back from the notion of immortality. That might be left out in order that he might cry with the entire force of his being, 'The grave cannot praise Thee; death cannot celebrate Thee. They that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth. The living! The living! They shall praise Thee, as I do this day.' That is religion in its root. We begin there; we lay fast hold there. Only out of that beginning can we go further. What was the step that carried it further for us? The discovery of the significance of sin. Who shall deliver? Who shall restore? 'Death shall deliver; death shall restore.' That is the answer. Death shall purge out death. That is the amazing news. That is the secret by which the channels of communion between the soul and God shall once again be flung open, and the life be set free from all that can ever kill it, and will admit the fresh, clean force of pardoning love, will live again with a life that can never die. 'Death cannot celebrate Thee. The grave cannot praise Thee, the living, the living shall praise Thee, as I do this day.'

Religion is life, but now in Christ this life has already been through the purging of death. There is our creed in its fullness. 'The life that we live now in the flesh, we live in the power of Him who has died and risen again; of Him who has death now not in front of Him but behind.' It is a life on which death has left its mark, but only to increase its glory; for the death that it has died is the death that delivers and cleanses. This life has made death to be the very secret of its victory. Death itself is dead in Him who lived and was dead, and is alive now for evermore.

3. What is the practical result for us? It is this. We who are in Christ need not go on staring into the dark horror of coming death, striving helplessly to anticipate what is hidden from us, straining into the blind darkness in unprofitable impotence. We can leave that alone. We can trust ourselves to meet it when it comes, whatever it may mean. For we are already in touch and in communion with the life that has passed through it. And that is the life which is now to possess and rule us, and it will do so in the power of Jesus Christ, who has already transformed death into victory. We are in possession of the seed of a life that died and has lived. And so we are now dying. We are to try and anticipate not physical death in imagination, which we cannot do, but anticipate in fact and conduct this death, which we can do. For the power to do it is in us. We are to begin dying now; dying to ourselves; dying to the lust of the eye and the pride of life; dying to ambition, envy, hatred, malice, all uncharitableness. Dying to our best self also inasmuch as it, too, is seen to be flawed and soiled and must be reborn before we can trust it and bring it for a pure offering before God. We must let our very best be laid there on the Cross of Jesus, that He may fashion it anew. We must let all go, making the entire surrender—heart, desire, thought. That is our calling; that is our life of faith.

¶ A beautiful treatise has come to us out of the Middle Ages. It is entitled 'The Craft of Dying.' Its aim is so to fortify the child of God, as he addresses himself to go down into the 'ghostly battle' that marks the end of his militant course, that he may 'die well.' We need a similar treatise to teach us how to die with Christ. 'We *have* died with him,' says the Apostle, therefore 'reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.'[1]

And all this we are enabled to do through and in Christ. Death is to give us the cue by which to interpret and order our life. Death, not as a miserable end to all that makes life bright and beautiful, but death as the instrument of renewal, as the mode of our re-birth,

[1] D. M. M'Intyre, *Life in His Name*, 176.

as the law of our transfiguration—death is to be the hour when we make our perfect offering.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
To work, and speak, and think for Thee;
Still let me guard the holy fire,
And still stir up Thy gift in me.

Ready for all Thy perfect will,
My acts of faith and love repeat,
Till death Thy endless mercies seal,
And make my sacrifice complete.[1]

4. And what enables death to become this pure offering? Just one thing—that it should be robbed of its sting, robbed of that which renders it the mark of our ruin. And the sting of death is sin. Die to sin, and death has no sting, no fear, no menace. Die to sin now, and death has lost its terror.

¶ One incident of the voyage to America served as a sharp test to Wesley of his own spiritual condition. Amongst the passengers he found a little group of Moravian exiles, who, by the simplicity and seriousness of their piety, strangely interested him. A storm broke over the ship one evening just as these simple-minded Germans had begun a religious service; Wesley describes what follows: 'In the midst of the Psalm wherewith their service began, the sea broke over, split the mainsail in pieces, covered the ship, and poured in between the decks as if the great deep had already swallowed us up. A terrible screaming began amongst the English. The Germans calmly sang on. I asked one of them afterwards, "Were you not afraid?" He answered, "I thank God, no." I asked, "But were not your women and children afraid?" He replied mildly, "No; our women and children are not afraid to die." From them I went to their crying, trembling neighbours, and pointed out to them the difference in the hour of trial between him that feareth God and him that feareth Him not.'

Now Wesley knew that he had not mastered the secret of that strange contempt of death. 'I have a sin of fear,' he said then, and for many a day afterwards. And he knew that the touch of death has for religion the office of an acid on gold. It is a test—the most searching of tests. And under the touch of that dreadful acid of fear, Wesley's religion at this stage failed him.

[1] C. Wesley.

It was not that he recoiled from the mere icy breath of death; else would he have had less courage than the recruiting sergeant can buy in every market for a few pence a day. But there are mysterious elements in death, which make it the symbol of sin's triumph, the crowning act of sin's dark reign. The human soul is dimly conscious that in moral evil there are dark and strange forces—depths unsounded, relations with God and His universe unrealized—and death brings the soul face to face with these last and uttermost elements of wrong-doing. So it is that sin and death, while strangely akin, are strangely abhorrent to each other. And as Wesley's religion at this stage failed to deliver him from the fear of death, he judged, rightly enough, that he had not yet found in it any complete deliverance from sin, death's sad ancestress.[1]

There is the living gospel which we must be up and doing to make our own. We can be at it now. Day by day we may be becoming more dead to sin, so that at the last, when death is on us, it will be but the close of a familiar process, the consummation of an habitual effort. We shall understand it; for we shall have made it our friend. It will be the ultimate moment of our life-long offering; and on the far side of the river, by the mercy of God we shall find ourselves surprised at the great peace fallen upon us, and say with the poet:

Why have I now no fear in meeting Him?
Along my earthly life the thought of death
And judgment were to me most terrible.
Now that the hour has come, my fear is fled,
And, with the balance of my destiny
Now close upon me, can forward look
With the serenest joy.

The Springs and the River

1 Cor. xv. 55-57, xvi. 1.—'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Now concerning the collection.'

Are you conscious of a sudden and painful descent in the plane of the thought? Do you perceive a chilling change in the temperature?

[1] W. H. Fitchett, *Wesley and His Century*, 97.

'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? . . . Now concerning the collection.' Is the association unworthy? Is the transition harsh and jarring? No such feeling of the incongruous possessed the consciousness of the Apostle Paul. He passed from one to the other without any perception of unwelcome change. The intrusion of a duty did not mar the heavenly music, but rather completed it.

The fifteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Corinthians is the country of the springs; the sixteenth opens with a glimpse of the river. The fifteenth is the country of the truth, fundamental Christian truth, in which our personal hopes and triumphs have their birth; with the opening of the sixteenth we catch a glimpse of the shining graces which are the happy issue of the truth. 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' That is the land of the springs. 'Now for the collection.' That is the beneficent river.

1. Look away for a moment to the springs. The Apostle is joyfully recounting our hopes and triumphs in Christ. 'O death, where is thy sting?' It is almost the laughing, mocking taunt of one who dare go quite near to the old terror without being afraid. The once grim, black, affrighting terror has lost its only weapon. Death is now harmless as a stingless bee. To those in Christ death has no poison. O grave, thou dark abyss, thou ever-open mouth, ever-swallowing, never satisfied, always a victor, never a victim. Never a victim? Christ is risen! Where is its victory?' That is the place of the springs. 'Christ is risen!' Add to that the firm, clear, heartening trumpet-note of the gospel: 'He that believeth in me shall never die,' he shall never feel death's sting; there shall be no poison in its touch. There shall be no sense of separation, no outer darkness; the hour of death shall be the hour of transition into the calm light of eternal day. That is the land of the springs!

¶ In a letter to Mr Gladstone she speaks of the death of her friend Caroline Macnaghten: 'As I went into her room early in the morning of the last day she spent on earth, she said with a quiet rapture of tone and countenance, "Before nightfall I shall see the King in His beauty." When her mother repeated to her the Psalmist's words, "Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil," she replied, "There are no shadows here, dearest mother, it is all sunshine." And to me she said with her pleasant smile, "I shall tell John Bunyan that he made a mistake. No river, no flood, no waters! My Saviour is lifting me over the narrow line which divides me from His Living glorious Presence."

'I wish *you* had seen her. It was all so real, so simple, so natural—and she looked like a young Queen, crowned with her golden hair—and her eyes filled with a sort of victorious happiness. "More than a conqueror through Him that loved her."'[1]

> And thou, most kind and gentle Death,
> Waiting to hush our latest breath,
> Thou leadest home the child of God,
> And Christ our Lord the way hath trod.

The glorious burden of chapter xv. is the emancipation and enlargement of life in the risen Christ. Now see the beautiful succession, taking its rise in the last verse of chapter xv., and emerging clearly into view in the first verse of chapter xvi. The larger life is succeeded, or rather accompanied, by larger living. 'Wherefore,' says the Apostle, if these things are so,—death stingless, grave crownless, life and immortality brought to light—'be ye stedfast, unmoveable,' let your walk be characterized by strength and firmness and confidence; don't be shaken into timid uncertainties by every little whiff of hostile speech: 'be ye stedfast and unmoveable'—'always abounding in work,' your cup running over in rich and gracious ministry. Having larger life, now largely live! Christianity emerges and expresses itself in a passionate enthusiasm for humanity. 'Thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory . . . Now for the collection.'

2. What was the occasion of this collection? There was a large body of poor Jews in Jerusalem who had eagerly received the Christ of God. Their hearts were as dry as a blasted heath, and they panted for the water of life. They found the refreshment they sought in Jesus the Christ. They turned to Him, and offered Him the homage of their minds and

[1] L. E. O'Rorke, *The Life and Friendships of Catherine Marsh*, 254.

hearts. For this they were excommunicated, outlawed, banned. Because of their life they were denied a living, and they began to be in want. We can hardly form any adequate conception of the intense hatred and repulsion with which the Jews regard those whom they consider renegade members of their race.

¶ One evening at sunset Ephraim, the head teacher in a rabbinical school, walked into Mr Ewing's study and, taking off his tarbush, or fez, an act of unusual courtesy, said, 'I am minded to be a Christian.' His regular visits afterwards to the missionary's study aroused suspicion, and a watch was set on his movements. He was about to come to the deciding point when he was charged by the rabbis with apostasy. Not denying his purpose, he was suspended from his position as schoolmaster and subjected to a pitiless storm of persecution. When the Jewish feasts were due he started off for Nazareth, but the rabbis, shrewdly suspecting that it was a plan to avoid taking part in the ceremonies, raised a hostile crowd, which followed him and forced him to return to the town.

Then he disappeared from the knowledge of the missionaries. Afterwards it became known that a false accusation of theft had been brought against him, and that he had been confined in a filthy cell and suffered unspeakable degradation. His resolution and his spirit remaining unbroken, he was flogged and starved, a punishment which injured his health for life.

'Many months later,' writes Mr Ewing, 'one of the missionaries riding in the Upper Jordan valley saw a forlorn figure bending over his task in the field, under a hot sun, and was surprised on nearer approach to find it none other than Ephraim. He was greatly changed. The hardships he had endured had left their marks upon his frame, and the lines had deepened on his weather-beaten features; but there was a light of eager welcome in his eyes. In answer to questions he told briefly of his experiences. But these things had not moved him. Return to Tiberias was then impossible. For self-support he willingly endured the weariness of unwonted toil in the service of the stranger, until it should please God to make his duty plain.[1]

These were precisely the conditions which prevailed in Jerusalem. But Christianity fostered humanity; faith evoked philanthropy; and from their fellow-believers in wider fields there flowed a steady stream of beneficence to relieve their distress. From Galatia, from Corinth, and from Rome there flowed the gracious river of brotherly feeling, which makes glad the city of God. In all this there was something quite unique. It was a novelty in the history of the world. It was a beneficence that overflowed conventional boundaries. In earlier days there had been beneficence that was patriotic; now there arose beneficence that was humane. It was not the sympathy of Jew with Jew, or of Roman with Roman, or of Greek with Greek. The race-lines crossed. It was the sympathy of Roman with Jew, of Gentile with Jew, of man with man. 'Henceforth there was neither Jew nor Gentile.' The stern, hoary race-limits were quite submerged in the voluminous sentiment of philanthropy born of a common faith in the redeeming Christ of God.

Now see how this acted. There is nothing that so welds people together as a common sentiment. A common passage through a common grief has united many sundered hearts. It is not otherwise with the radiant sentiment of joy. A common object has ended many an isolation. Get people to have a common sentiment, and you have taken a very vital step towards a fruitful union. Let the Roman be beneficently disposed towards the outlawed Jew, let a similar sentiment possess the hearts of the Corinthians and the Galatians, and you may be sure that Roman, Corinthian and Galatian will be cemented together in the bonds of a closer kinship. That is one of the most gracious ministries of the Christian religion. Let a man hold the essential virtues of the Christian faith—or rather, let him be held by them, let them possess him—let the transcendent truth of this fifteenth chapter constitute his convictions and hopes, and from his life there will inevitably proceed a river of beneficent sentiment which will mingle with other gladsome streams, flowing from men of kindred faith, and they will become one in the common enthusiasm of humanity, as they are one in the common glory of a great redemption. The birth of Christianity was the birth of a new philanthropy.

3. Truth and activity are related as springs

[1] *A Galilee Doctor: The Life of Dr Torrance of Tiberias*, 134.

and rivers. If we want the one to be brimming, we must not ignore the other. Beneficence will soon become thin and scanty if it does not take its rise in the hills. Begin with chapter xvi., 'Now concerning the collection,' and the result will be a forced and chilling artifice. You begin without momentum, without the impulse of adequate constraint. Begin on the heights of chapter xv., and chapter xvi. will emerge with the sequence of inevitable result. This collection is related to the Resurrection, and if we hide or minimise the truth of the Resurrection, our beneficence will only be a transient emotion, and not the full and sustained volume of the river of water of life. That was the cardinal and all-determining weakness of Robert Elsmere. He erased chapter xv., and began with chapter xvi. He denied the Resurrection, and all the spacious and heartening truths which gather about it; and out of the dry, vacuous heart of its negation sought to educe a river of benevolent energy for the permanent enrichment of the race. We try to make rivers when sometimes in our lives there is no hill-country, no land of plentiful springs. 'I will open rivers in *high* places!' and only when we have the 'high places' in our life, the enthroned and sovereign truths of atonement and resurrection, and the sublime and awful prospect of an unveiled immortality, only then will our life be a land of springs, musical with the sound of many waters, flowing with rivers to cheer and refresh the children of men.

By all means multiply your channels, broaden and extend them, but keep open your resources. The purity of your soul, the sweetness of your home and the hope of its permanency, the ennobled fellowship of the race, the glorious expectancy of a life incorruptible and undefiled, all are ours in 'Christ Jesus our Lord.'

'Stedfast, Unmoveable'

1 Cor. xv. 58.—'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

This verse has a wonderful ring of confidence in it. It seems to be a kind of challenge to a godless world that has tried and broken its last weapon against the disciples of Jesus.

St Paul has been writing to the Corinthians of many things when suddenly he breaks in and tells them about death and the life beyond. He tells them of the Resurrection and the glory that is to be revealed to the children of God. People in those days were being killed for their faith. For a man to become a Christian needed courage. In this chapter on the Resurrection St Paul shows them that for a man to die was not the greatest misfortune that could befall him. Worse things can happen to people than that. It is worse for a man to play the coward and fail of his duty. Seeing that we must all die, a worse thing can befall us than to die a few years before our time. It would be worse for us if we sacrificed our manhood, worse for us to betray our loyalty to Christ, worse for us to deny our faith and fail in our discipleship. That is what St Paul wanted these Corinthians to know. That is what he wants us to know—that what we call 'death' is for the Christian victory and gain. 'If,' says the Apostle, 'death is the worst the world can give you, and if death means victory, then be stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.'

It is very striking and very expressive of the real spirit of the gospel that a chapter which leads us step by step through the calm process of logic, and through glowing passages of resistless eloquence to the sublimest thoughts of immortality, should at last thus close with words of plain and practical duty.

1. The word 'stedfast' means literally 'seated.' It refers to something that is settled. So far as your convictions of truth and duty are concerned, be seated. Do not stand up in an attitude of readiness to change, but be seated as a man who has arrived and knows in whom he has believed.

It is to be feared many are standing up to-day on questions relating to the soul, the soul's destiny, and the soul's God. The time we live in is an unsettled one. Old policies, old principles, old watchwords, are being tried and found wanting. And religion is also touched and influenced by this deep and widespread unrest. Men are supposed to have opinions not convictions. But the just man lives by his faith in the great certainties of which the Apostle speaks, and without these settled convictions could be no more fit to be a leader and guide to his fellow-men than a

firefly or glow-worm twinkling in the darkness. It is only when the great Christian verities are lifted above the debating ground of life that a man can face his burdens and duties bravely. 'No form of anæmia is more weakening than to say that there is nothing worth living for and fighting for. Men do not become martyrs for opinions. They do not suffer the loss of all things for a philosophy or some form of new thought. It is conviction that counts, and the world will always make way for the man who suffers for truth's sake.' It was under deep conviction that St Paul said: 'I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God.' Believe some things so strongly, says the Apostle, as to be willing to die for them.

This is what the Church needs supremely. She needs men to have convictions, not opinions. Opinions accomplish nothing. Opinions are straw men, ready to be knocked down at the first breath of opposition. As Heine says: 'Opinions build no cathedrals. They write no *Te Deums* nor great poems, neither do they inaugurate great movements.'

¶ A hundred years ago the Paris newspapers displayed, in flaming headlines, on successive days, the following news concerning Napoleon's escape from Elba: March 9, 'The monster has escaped his den.' March 11, 'The tiger has arrived at Gap!' March 12, 'The fiend slept at Grenoble.' March 18, 'Bonaparte is only sixty leagues from the capital.' March 20, 'To-morrow Napoleon will be under our ramparts.' March 21, 'The emperor is at Fontainebleau.' March 22, 'His imperial and royal majesty, yesterday evening, arrived at the Tuileries, amid the joyful acclamations of his devoted and faithful subjects.'

Morley tells us how amused Gladstone always was with the remembrance of the definition of taste given by a certain regius professor of divinity at Oxford. It was this: 'Taste is the ability to coincide with the opinion of the majority.' 'If you teach a man,' says Robert Louis Stevenson, 'to keep his eyes upon what others think of him, unthinkingly to lead the life and hold the principles of the majority of his contemporaries, you must discredit in his eyes the authoritative voice of his own soul.' Is it not our greatest weakness, religiously, that men believe only in a half-hearted way and are ready to change their belief for something more convenient? Is it not our weakness, commercially and financially, that men hold no convictions of what is right and just, but will change their mind when a way to success opens up?

Sit down, says the Apostle. If you have a belief hold to it. Do not let it escape you. Suffer defeat rather than give up your convictions. Jesus told us to put God and His Kingdom and our duty to Him first. Let us believe our beliefs so strongly that to fail of our duty will be to make on our hearts a scar so deep and so black that only the bitterest tears of repentance can wash it out.

2. After steadfastness of conviction there must come the determination to be personally responsible for these convictions. Convictions imply one convicted. They are not impersonal ideas. They imply an unmovable attitude on the part of the one who holds them. It is one thing to have convictions, another thing to hold them against indifference and opposition. And not only to hold them, but to keep on holding them; not only to do something, but to keep on doing it.

'Be ye stedfast and unmoveable'—steadfast in ourselves and in our moral condition, and unmovable against influences that may come from the outside world. The order of this entreaty shows where the greatest peril is. If we be established in ourselves, all the onsets of external fires will only serve to strengthen our position.

But we must first be sure of ourselves. The Christian is by his very nature a reformer. He is first a reformer of himself. Next he is a reformer of his fellow-man. He tries to bring to bear upon him the same spiritual forces that accomplished his own regeneration. After that he becomes a reformer of society and the world. He is a man who is trying to make things better. He has his eye on an ideal manhood and an ideal world, and for these he labours at whatever cost. But the test of his genuineness is his ability to hold on. Before Israel was two days out of Egypt, the vote and cry of the people was: 'Back to Egypt.' But Moses, the reformer, was 'unmoveable.' He persevered. He endured as seeing Him who was invisible. When Jesus had reached the zenith of His popularity

and the crowds began to desert Him, did He give up and go back to yoke making? No, He marched on alone, right up the hill of Calvary to a cross. When St Paul was called to be a preacher and reformer what was he to do? Was he to proclaim his message and if it did not meet with instant and complete acceptance was he to give up and go back to the old life? No, when the Lord Jesus called him it was not to popularity with the people, he was not commissioned to push Cæsar off the throne and mount it himself. This was the word to Ananias: 'Go show Paul how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.'

¶ 'We must go on,' said John Newton, 'even when we find we are going off'; doing still, steadfastly, what we can. My beloved friend, the Rev. C. A. Fox, true saint, true preacher, true worker, and wonderfully true sufferer, and also true poet of purest genius, wrote at the end of a short note to me these four deep lines:

Two glad services are ours;
Both the Master deigns to bless;
First we serve with all our powers,
Then with all our feebleness.[1]

If we would be steadfast and unmovable in our religious convictions, we must 'abound in the work of the Lord.' In this the Corinthian Christians had failed. Instead of busying themselves in the Lord's work, they idly gave heed to this and to that vain speculation which was brought under their notice. And many of them had given up their work because they thought that the end of the world was at hand—an unsettling thought. 'Go back to your work,' said the Apostle. When the Lord Christ comes we shall be readier to meet Him when occupied with our ordinary duties. For the work of the Lord is the same kind of work as the Lord Himself does—good work always. 'Always abounding in the work of the Lord.'

And most wonderful is the promise that no work is in vain in the Lord. Apparent failure there may be, but it is a failure that succeeds at last. Christ is alive and takes pleasure in what we do. Because He has gone up into heaven, we shall share in His resurrection. It is worth our while then to labour that we may prepare ourselves for a life so endurable and glorious.

[1] H. C. G. Moule.

Always

1 Cor. xv. 58.—'Always abounding in the work of the Lord.'

Faber has a saying to this effect: 'Remember, in the spiritual life there are recreations, but there are no holidays; that school breaks up but once, and the home afterwards is eternal.' The saying is true, but it goes scarcely far enough. For the principles of the school persist in the eternal home, and reach their fullest development there. The characteristic word of the spiritual life, on earth and heaven is *Always*.

'Always' is a keyword of Christianity. Other religions make concessions to human nature. They allow periods of outbreak and unrestraint. If you will keep the law 360 days in the year, you can have five days to work your own will. You will be set free from one commandment if only you will obey the rest. Even in the corrupted forms of Christianity this tendency to allow some occasional relaxation may be found. No doubt it is very congenial to human nature, and it helps to make the acceptance of a religion very much easier. We are not so unwilling to conform at times if times of license are given to us. But Christianity makes no exception, permits of no deviation. It takes its law and its power from the presence of Christ, who is with us always, all the days, through all the years of vivid experience, with their every grief and joy. The law was written of old on the tables of stone. Now we have the presence of the Lawgiver, and the law shines from the eyes of the Christ who never leaves us. Christ Himself is never absent, never gives us leave to go astray even for an instant.

This would be terrible news and no gospel if it were not that the Presence of Christ is power as well as law. Of ourselves we cannot keep the commandments. Man cannot permanently raise himself. Neither civilization nor anything included under civilization can make and keep a moral ascent. When Christ appeared art and culture had done their best, and yet the world was perishing in a debasement of animalism and lust. It wanted the power to secure its moral gains. Many things, we are told, in these days threaten the commercial future of Great Britain. Of our dangers, one is the possible exhaustion of power. So the great need of the Church is power. Without that power it cannot go

on living. But the power it needs is supplied by Christ through the Holy Spirit. Into our wavering hearts He seeks to pour the new wine of His Spirit, and thus to make them strong. It is an old and true saying, 'What the soul is to the body that Christ is to the soul.' As the body when the soul has passed from it is still, motionless, perishing, so is the soul without Christ dead in trespasses and sins, unable to recover itself and wake. When He takes full possession He reanimates and rules, and the passions that went after forbidden things are disenchanted and frozen.

Thou knowest, Lord, that we alone
Should surely fail;
We have no wisdom of our own
That could prevail;
Yet Thou, through human helplessness,
Canst work Thy will—canst help and bless.

Take these weak hands, and hold them, Lord;
Our Helper be.
In Thee is all our fullness stored;
We come to Thee,
And know that, by Thy Spirit's might,
We must be victors in the fight.[1]

So confident of its power is Christianity that it carries its perpetual demands into every region of labour and thought. Thus we are to be '*always* abounding in the work of the Lord.' Has Christianity, then, no place for rest? If there is one thing above another in this world that we claim and crave, it is the privilege of rest. If six days of the week we labour and do our work, then does not the seventh belong to us? If we toil for eleven months of the year, do we not need the twelfth for play? Does Christ grudge us rest? No, verily, for it was as the Rest-giver that He came. Did He not mercifully say to His disciples, 'Rest awhile'? Yes; but He bound together labour and rest as all the work of the Lord. When He rested Himself, He set the pattern of resting for His people. 'Jesus being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well.' Sat *thus*. He did not say, 'No one can claim Me. I have been set free by God and man to please Myself for the time, and no need but My own may urge itself upon Me.' No; for then we read that the Weary gave rest to the weary. The Saviour preached to the woman of Samaria, and gave her of the water of life. It may be, and it is sometimes, just as much the work of the Lord to rest as to labour. What is constant is our obligation to abound in the work of the Lord, to toil and to cease from toiling in His presence, by His strength, under His eye.

More than that, Christianity enters into the region of mood and feeling. It seems as if that world could never be brought under complete command. Our actions, our words we may recall; but who is to control emotion, who can answer for the moods that come and go, independently, as it seems, of our will? It is written, 'Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.' But how hard that is, specially hard for us, for of all the emotions the emotion which our nation feels least is that of pure joy. It has almost died from us, save in the case of the very young. How are we to rejoice always, amid the absorbing and confounding sorrows of life, amid the daily fret of care, in the dark and long desolations? How can we help being oftentimes sick and sad at heart when existence is without tide and force, when the sphere of activity is closed, and we see with a dull aching the morning rise and the evening fall? Yes; but the commandment does not enjoin us to be always light-hearted. It does not forbid grief. Christianity does not say that we are not to sorrow. What it forbids is the sorrow that is without hope. Christ says, Whoever comes and goes, I am with you—rejoice in Me. We know how in the heaviest afflictions there is almost always something left to live for. Yet there may be a desolation which is humanly complete. Even then a spring of joy remains. 'I am with you all the days,' and the joy in Christ is to persist, though all other lights are blown out. So it may be, so it has been. This is not a dream, however it may seem one.

All are not taken; there are left behind
Living Belovèds, tender looks to bring,
And make the daylight still a happy thing,
And tender voices, to make soft the wind.
But if it were not so—if I could find
No love in all the world for comforting,
Nor any path but hollowly did ring,
Where 'dust to dust' the love from life disjoined,
And if, before those sepulchres unmoving,

[1] Edith H. Divall, *A Believer's Rest*, 54.

I stood alone (as some forsaken lamb
Goes bleating up the moors in weary dearth),
Crying, 'Where are ye, O my loved and loving?' . . .
I know a Voice would sound, 'Daughter, I AM.
Can I suffice for HEAVEN, and not for earth?'[1]

Again, says the Apostle, we are always confident. Does this mean that the Apostle was a stranger to depression and fear? No servant of Christ has ever escaped these, has ever failed to know that strange sinking of the heart in the face of hostile powers, with which most of us are familiar. What he means is that he was confident about the issue. Even if his foes drove him away they sent him to the Lord.

If my bark sink, 'tis to another sea.

The wildest winds could but toss him to Christ's breast. We are never to lose this confidence for ourselves, nor ever to lose our assurance, nor ever to despair of the wonderful Church of Christ, nor falter in our faith that the Redeemer's victory is won and sure.

One moment, she said,
And the dead will revive;
The giants are falling,
The saints are alive.

Christ said, 'I do always the things that please Him'; but we cannot say it. How often we have forgotten the Presence, neglected the Power. Yes; but He has provided for that. If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. There is a continual duel going on over the soul that we care so little for, to which we are often so cruel, to whose entreaties we are so deaf. The adversary never ceases to accuse, the Advocate never ceases to plead. And so after so many temptations and so many failures, we may still be able to say, 'I have kept the faith.' Only we must be like the great Christian who left instructions that on his tomb should be written nothing but his name, the dates of his birth and death, and the words, 'Enter not into judgment with Thy servant.'

And the end is 'for ever with the Lord.' He said to His disciples, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.' He said to the thief whose self-dedication was so quickly ratified, Thou shalt be with Me. Though Christ has never for a moment left us, yet how often have we been unconscious of His Presence, uncheered, unwarmed, uncontrolled. But the day is coming when we shall see His face, when we shall understand how much better it is to be with Him, even than to have Him with us. How much better even than the faith that transcends reason and outstrips experience is the Vision. So let us not fear to let the great future draw us, even if the present dwindles.

Go preach then to him of a world to come,
Where friends shall meet and know each other's face;
Say less than this, and say it to the winds.

[1] E. B. Browning.

Labour that is not in Vain

1 Cor. xv. 58.—'Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

THE work of the Lord is that at which we labour. It is just our Christian calling. It is the whole activity of Christian men performed, as it were, in the atmosphere of Christ. Just because every task can be so wrought, and can be sanctified by prayer and thanksgiving, so the whole compass of a man's active life may be included in our word labour. Your labour may be your personal salvation, 'for this is the work of God, that ye believe' in Christ; or it may be preaching, if you are a minister. But remember—if you are toiling in the city, if you are working on school board or in council, if your place is at the counter or at the bench, if your sphere of service be the kitchen, all this may be the toil of which St Paul speaks, for it may all be accomplished 'in the Lord,' and if 'in the Lord' then this is true of it—it can never be in vain.

1. What are some of the experiences that make us think our labour is in vain?

(1) There is *the apparent dearth of results.* How many there are who carry on their labours without a single word of recognition; who toil year after year without seeming to make any difference to anybody, while the state of things is no better than when they began. The world continues its accustomed way, and those whom they had hoped to influence seem not a whit

the better of it all. The despondency of John the Baptist had its roots in some such feeling as that. For a time it had seemed as if he would regenerate his country, but now he was in prison and his work was over; the tide of national life flowed on as ever, and men were as mean and vicious and selfish as if he had never lifted up his voice. There is a gladness and a zest in labour, and a great pleasure when the Lord prospers any good. There is always a courage for to-morrow in the recognition of usefulness to-day, but when one has to toil without sign of progress or result, one is apt to cry, 'I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for naught.' This is especially the case in our experience of spiritual life. There is nothing so disheartening in that life as what appears like lack of progress. We had hoped to advance to victory, and often we seem to be just marking time. We had hoped to grow riper in Christ Jesus, but there is no ripening visible to-day, and with all our effort and prayer how weak we are, how easily overcome! How faint is yet the call to what is high, and how urgent the call to what is evil. But what discourages spiritual men is this, that the cloud so soon 'returns after the rain,' and that all the hard-won beauty of the summer seems to be swept away like autumn leaves. It is the feeling that we have made no progress that settles down like night on the heart, and so in silent hours when we are alone with our past and with our God, we are sometimes visited by the strange fear lest our labour in the Lord should be in vain.

(2) We are all prone to this despair *at seasons of constant and overwhelming failure.* There are hours of overthrow so terrible that all the past seems withered at their touch. It has been noted how under the influence of panic men may revert to ancestral qualities. All they have gained through centuries of discipline, seems in a moment of terror to pass away. There may come hours of constant and overwhelming failure, when men have sinned against all light and love and sunk in a moment into profound depths, and the penalty of all such hours is that the past crumbles into ashes, and all its hard-won victories seem in vain. It was that which broke the heart of Peter when he went out into the night and wept.

¶ Of one thing I am quite sure, and that is that this existence is only a phase in our lives, and that we all have to learn our lessons sooner or later. Who knows but that the very periods which we are in the habit of looking on as waste and fallow, when we are conscious of injustice, when everything goes wrong, when we are thwarted and baulked in our endeavours to help our cause, and are not in a position to pull our full weight, are not the very periods when we are advancing most, fitting ourselves for greater things, and making most progress towards obtaining decorations which will not find their way to the pawnbroker's? [1]

(3) We are in peril of this despair *when we review the past*, for there are times when the most optimistic may question the reality of progress. Barrie in his charming book *The Little Minister*, tells that when the little minister came to Thrums he went to see the aged minister who had been working there forty years, and said to him: 'I begin where you leave off.' The old man with a sigh cried: 'You ought to begin where I began.' It was so, you remember, with Elijah when he fled into the desert from Jezebel. 'Now let me die,' he cried to God, 'for I am not better than my fathers.' What had been the fruit of all his toil, and how is Israel better for his sacrifice, in the light of what Israel is at the present hour? That such a mood is unworthy we know. At the heart of it is infidelity, disbelief in the order of God; yet such thoughts will visit us when we question the reality of progress, when we wonder if after all our culture we have not lost as much as we have gained. Many thought England a paradise when the Reform Bill was put on the statute book. What dreams there were of a renovated land when education would be universal! To-day the Reform Bill is still on the statute book and every ragged child is inside a school, yet from the heroic dignity of a great people we seem as far away as ever. It was this that well-nigh broke the heart of Wordsworth in the days that followed the French Revolution. When liberty became liberty to massacre, when the children of freedom began to play the tyrant, when they crushed the independence of the Swiss, progress seemed but a myth of the night, and men like Wordsworth in their hours of darkness gave up in despair.

(4) But perhaps we are most often tempted to think that our labour is in vain *when we*

[1] *A General's Letters to his Son.*

remember the weakness of all effort. We are never satisfied with what we do, we never complete what we begin.

¶ 'There is one element in human destiny,' writes Robert Louis Stevenson, 'that not blindness itself can controvert; whatever else we are intended to do, we are not intended to succeed. Failure is the fate allotted. It is so in every art and study; it is so above all in the continent art of living well.' [1]

Once, centuries ago, there hung upon the cross a Man who cried with a loud voice: 'It is finished.' That was the cry of triumph and of joy, but who of us labouring at our tasks, groping our way from effort to effort, can ever hope to echo the glad word that broke from the lips of Jesus on Calvary? It is all so fragmentary, all so incomplete; it is such a little piece of what we planned, and even the little that we do is so imperfect. Then, when our apprenticeship is closing and we are just beginning to be competent, comes the call of death. It is a fact with us as with Job that our 'days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle.' How that is intensified when the day is over ere it is well begun, when the hands have scarcely learned to play the instrument before that instrument is closed for ever. It was such thoughts that were in the Apostle's mind when he said, 'Your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

2. What assurances do we have that our labour in the Lord is not in vain?

(1) One assurance is *the vitality of all good influence.* Because God is at the back of goodness there is that in goodness which is immortal. We are apt to ignore that side of things because of the simple fact that good is unobtrusive. It does not strive nor cry, it is not unusual, it does not flaunt itself as evil does. Evil is like the whirlwind or storm, you hear it as it goes crashing through the forest; the voice of goodness which is the voice of God is a still small voice. 'I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven,' that is how it is pictured by our Lord; but you never find Himself compared to lightning. 'He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass.' Let some drunken husband kill his wife to-night and you will hear all about it in to-morrow's newspapers. Folk will talk of it; they will shudder at it; the vulgar crowd will go to see the place. A thousand homes are very happy to-day, a thousand wives are cherished in all tenderness. Yet when you open the newspaper to-morrow morning you will not hear a whisper of all that. There is something inconspicuous in all goodness, therefore to gauge its influence is difficult; but of this be sure, goodness is of God, and if God be living, goodness cannot die; therefore if your work be along the lines of God's will, you may be certain that it never can be in vain.

It is not true that 'the evil that men do lives after them,' that 'good is often interred with their bones.' The good arises in power from the dust and moves along in immortality, only it is so silent, so gentle, so hushed in voice, so noiseless in its tread that nothing is easier than to overlook it, and to imagine that labour is in vain.

¶ Mr Birrell tells that when he was in Cornwall he fell into conversation with a miner. 'You seem to be a temperate people here; how does it come about?' said Mr Birrell. The miner in reverence took off his cap and said: 'There came down a man among us once; his name was John Wesley.'

(2) Another assurance in such despairing hours arises from *the sphere in which we labour.* 'Your labour is not in vain in the Lord,' says St Paul. Christ is the sphere in which we toil. We speak of working for Christ—it is an honoured and a noble service. We do it not only in the Church, but also in the quiet of the home; but remember it is not labour for Christ that can ever give us assurance of success, it is when we know that our labour is in Christ that we realize that it can never be in vain. Nothing that Christ does ever fails, no purpose that Christ forms is ever shattered. 'At the name of Jesus,' says the Word of God, 'every knee shall bow and every tongue confess'; therefore, if you work in Christ, because God lives you shall live also; in His crowning your effort shall be crowned. And this is the wonder and the beauty of it all, that everything may be done in Jesus Christ. The lowliest service in the humblest home may be done in Christ for His sake, and if it be so done it can not fail, just because Jesus Christ can never fail. It is in Him, and you may leave it there.

(3) And, lastly, there is the great assurance—of which indeed St Paul is mainly thinking—which securely rests on *the hope of personal*

[1] *A Christmas Sermon.*

immortality. 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, then are we of all men most miserable.' Why should we thus be raised to new activity if all is over when we reach the grave? But if death be only a momentary break in a service that goes on for ever, then our labour can not be in vain. Christ called Simon and Andrew by the lake and said to them: 'I will make you fishers of men'; they were to be fishers still, though now in a higher and more glorious way. So when at death there comes to us a call, and we forsake everything and follow, all worth while that we have won with toil in the old life we shall carry into the new. There is not a battle we have ever won but will add to the music of our triumph song, there is not an effort we have ever made but will help us in our service yonder. We shall carry over into the life of glory all we did and tried and fought for here.

The tissue of the Life to be
We weave with colours all our own,
And in the field of Destiny
We reap as we have sown.

Think ye the notes of holy song
On Milton's tuneful ear have died?
Think ye that Raphael's angel throng
Has vanished from his side?

O no!—We live our life again;
Or warmly touched, or coldly dim,
The pictures of the Past remain,—
Man's works shall follow him![1]

[1] Whittier.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE OPEN DOOR

1 Cor. xvi. 8, 9.—'I will tarry at Ephesus till Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.'

We all admire a man of courage and high spirit, a man who is ever ready to do and dare in some great cause, to whom difficulty is an incentive and danger a challenge. We pride ourselves that this is the spirit of our nation, a daring and adventurous spirit, inherited doubtless from our ancestors in the days when the Vikings scoured the seas.

St Paul was a man of this stamp, a true knight of Jesus Christ if ever there was one. Our text is a flashlight letting us see the spirit of the man. He had been labouring in the great city of Ephesus for nearly three years, an unusually long period for him to spend in one place. He is anxious to visit other churches and to carry the gospel to the far West, but he feels that the situation in Ephesus is such that he cannot yet honourably leave his post. The opportunities of service are so great and the opposition so intense. 'A great door is opened unto me.' 'An effectual door,' he calls it, literally 'an energetic door.' The metaphor is mixed, but St Paul is not thinking of the figure of speech, but of the reality. And what he means is that confronting him in Ephesus is an opening for service which must be entered at all costs, an opportunity to be grasped with both hands, a work into which he must throw his energies to the last ounce. 'And there are many adversaries.' The opposition only makes the duty more incumbent. To desert in face of the enemy, to run away from it all, to seek an easier sphere would be the act of a coward.

Now we know something of all this from the Acts of the Apostles. There we read how Paul reasoned daily in the school of Tyrannus till all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks; how God wrought special miracles by the hand of Paul so that fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified; how the sorcerers' books were burned in the market-place and the trade of the image-makers was brought into disrepute, till at last a furious riot was made, and, when Paul would have gone into the theatre to face the mob, his friends held him back, believing that he would never come out alive. This riot probably took place in the month of May, 'the month of Diana,' when a great festival was held in Ephesus, attended by crowds of pilgrims, and in all likelihood this was the critical time to which Paul was looking forward when he wrote

to the Corinthians. The festival would present a unique opportunity for preaching the gospel, and at the same time it would be a period of special danger. Accordingly the Apostle feels in honour bound to see it through. It constituted a challenge which he dared not refuse.

Now St Paul's experience is typical, and the spirit he manifested is the true Christian spirit. For open doors are set before the Church and before every servant of Christ, and there are many adversaries. In other words, opportunities of service arise and opposition has to be encountered, and these together constitute a challenge to faith and courage.

I

THE OPEN DOOR

An open door is a fit image to express an opportunity of service, an 'opening' as we should call it. St Paul, as he went on his missionary journeys, had often occasion to note how the hand of God opened doors in front of him. On one memorable journey he and Silas were driven clear across Asia Minor, finding every door on the right hand and on the left closed against them, till on reaching Troas they found an open door into Europe, which door they made haste to enter, 'assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them' (Acts xvi. 10).

1. Such doors are continually, in the providence of God, being set before the Church, and are ever a signal to advance. In the letter to the church in Philadelphia, as recorded in the Book of Revelation, the promise is given, 'Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it' (Rev. iii. 8). This refers primarily to a door of service. Philadelphia, as Sir William Ramsay has shown, lay at the head of a valley which led up to the great central plateau of Asia Minor. The little church there had, therefore, a unique opportunity of carrying the gospel to the interior, and this is the open door which she is challenged by a Divine call to enter. Now, all along the line of the Church's history, the hand of God can be traced in the opening of doors. It has been remarked [1] that 'the most prosaic study of history will lead one to the conclusion that each special age of Christian outpouring has had for its forerunner a time of political unity —a time in which the earth has been drawn together as by a belt of contact.' And that 'when the Christian outpouring occurs at such a time, it receives from it a great advantage—an open door.' Indeed, the crowning romance of history, the supreme evidence that a Divine hand is guiding its course, is to be found in the marvellous way in which events are found, often most unexpectedly, to make openings for the advance of the cause of Christ.

Most conspicuously is this true of our own time. We live in the age of the open door. Our fathers who were interested in the spread of the gospel were accustomed to pray that God would open doors, for in their time the doors were fast closed in many lands. Their prayers have been answered, and to-day the doors are wide open. The gospel has free access to all lands, with a few insignificant exceptions. And not only are *lands* open, but, what is of far more importance, men's *minds* are open, as never before, to receive the truth. The slumber of the ancient East is completely broken, the tide of Western civilization has swept along every shore and found its way into the remotest creeks and inlets, and especially since the War there is world-wide upheaval and unrest. Humanity, it has been said, has struck its tents and is once again upon the march. Men's minds are at the moment unusually receptive, and so there has arisen a situation which presents to the Christian Church a unique opportunity of pouring the fluid mass into a Christian mould.

2. Before individuals also, as well as before the Church, the door is set open. Every man of spirit and energy is on the outlook for openings. Well, they are there, for those who have eyes to see. Gladstone, writing to his son, says, 'As you grow older you will find more and more how full the world and our life are of opportunity, and how impossible it is that, unless by our own fault, they should seem to present a blank.' [1] That was a fine spirit and a true perception in the poet Henley, who after months in Edinburgh Infirmary, on coming out a cripple, wrote,

> These are the streets,
> Each is an avenue leading whither I will.[2]

[1] G. Matheson, *Sidelights from Patmos*, 44.

[1] *Letters on Church and Religion*, ii. 164.
[2] *Hospital Verses*.

There are many things in life which seem to confront us with closed doors, as sickness, or some physical infirmity, or some moral weakness. But the Christian spirit refuses to subscribe to the doctrine of the closed door. There is always a way out, even as the pilgrims found from the very dungeon of Doubting Castle. Milton was shut in by his blindness but he found a 'great door and effectual' in the writing of Paradise Lost. John Bunyan was shut up in Bedford Jail, but he also found an outlet in the *Pilgrim's Progress*. In our own time Helen Keller was beyond measure shut in, deaf and dumb and blind, with only one possible avenue of contact with the outer world, through the sense of touch, yet through that avenue she passed out to a wide field of noble service.

Life, said Gladstone, can never 'seem, unless by our own fault, to present a blank.' Rather it is like the experience one sometimes has in sailing up some Scottish loch. The hills seem to stretch in an unbroken line in front, but as we draw nearer they part asunder and reveal a pass between, through which we sail into another great reach of water. Even so life finds an exit at the very point where it expected to meet a terminus, and the scene of its threatened extremity becomes the place of its emergence. This is true even of death itself. Death looks like the end of activity and hope, the end of love and life itself. It looks like the final closing of the door. Yet Christ's hand has thrown open that door and made it the gateway into a higher life and service. St Paul was heartened by this faith. If, he says, 'I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not?' (1 Cor. xv. 32.) But, in the light of the resurrection, the worst his enemies could do would only 'throw open the gates of new life' to him. Few writers in any age have sounded this note of triumphant hope more powerfully than the poet Browning, who 'held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better, sleep to wake.'[1] At his funeral Sir Edward Burne-Jones felt rebellious at the sombreness of the service. 'I would have given something for a banner or two, and much would I have given if a chorister had come out of the triforium and rent the air with a trumpet.' Because he felt that his friend had passed in triumph through the open door of death into the larger life.

[1] *Epilogue to Asolando.*

II

THE ADVERSARIES

'And there are many adversaries.' So St Paul found it when he attempted to enter the open door, and so has it ever been. Wherever there is advance there is opposition. Our Lord found it so, and He foretold that this would be the experience of His disciples also. 'If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.' 'If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.' 'I came not to send peace on earth but a sword.' It is not, therefore, to be expected that the Kingdom of God on earth will have an unopposed advance. On the contrary, where the advance is greatest there will the opposition be bitterest. In the Great War there were parts of the line where for a time there was complete quietness, but whenever one side became active it instantly awoke a responsive activity on the other side. So let any individual or any Church become active in the service of Christ, and it will be found that adversaries are stirred up in proportion to the activity.

This opposition may take many forms. It may manifest itself in the form of open hostility leading to persecution, as was the case in Ephesus. Or it may wear the garb of a false friendship, that 'friendship of the world' which is 'enmity with God.' This is the danger which in our time is most to be feared. It is, indeed, the more deadly form of enmity, just as a traitor within the camp is more to be feared than an open enemy. We may say of the Church what the English prince said of his country—

> This England never did, nor never shall,
> Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
> But when it first did help to wound itself.
> . . . Nought shall make us rue,
> If England to itself do rest but true.[1]

So will the Church be strong to meet all outward opposition if only she be true to the Spirit of Christ.

If one were asked to name the adversaries which are set in array among ourselves and most powerfully hinder the cause of Christ, one might put together a formidable list. One

[1] Shakespeare, *King John*, V. vii.

might name drunkenness and gambling and social impurity and worldliness, grim beasts all of them. One might perhaps give a special place to that extravagant love of excitement, and, alas! often of unclean excitement, which is being so assiduously fostered among us in these days. One might well ask, how can the voice of the Church prevail against the thousand voices of the theatres and music-halls and cinemas, of the sensation-mongering newspapers and magazines and novelettes which continually cry in our streets? How can we hope that the still small voice, which reasons of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, will make itself heard among all the distractions of our city life, in these hurrying crowded days in which we live? Truly, as in Ephesus of old, so in our land and in our time 'there are many adversaries.' They all in their degree are emissaries of that kingdom of darkness which is set in eternal antagonism to the kingdom of light. They are all born of that spirit of evil which is everywhere out to oppose and, if possible, ruin the work of God and the souls of men.

III

THE CHALLENGE

Such, then, is the situation which confronts the Church, and it constitutes a challenge to energy and courage. When St Paul found the open door in front of him, he resolved by the help of God to enter it, and the fact that there were many adversaries, instead of deterring him, was only an additional incentive. It is perfectly clear that the adversaries were a part of the attraction to his warrior soul. He does not say he is going to stay in spite of them, but rather because of them. Not like the spies of Israel who came back with glowing reports of a goodly land, but the walled cities and the giants and the chariots of iron made it impossible to enter. Had the Apostle been there he would have stood with Joshua and Caleb, calling for an immediate advance. It has been truly said of him that 'he never asked for the green pastures and the still waters where he might lie down in delicious rest and peace. And while the wars of the Lord are afoot, and the world is unsubdued, I am not sure that any of us have the right to ask for them.' [1]

[1] *Christian World Pulpit*, lxxv. 286.

1. The open door is a challenge to energetic advance. Life does not force action upon us, but rather sets openings in our way which it is ours to enter. We must never fall into the black mood of thinking that all things are moved by an iron fate which leaves us no real freedom of action. That is a brand of pessimism which closes all the doors of life and makes the world a prison-house of mechanical cause and effect. Neither must we repose in an easy optimism which declares that all must inevitably go well by the sheer power of the loving will of God, without human co-operation. 'Sit down, young man,' said an old minister to William Carey, 'when it pleases the Lord to convert the heathen, He can do so without your help.' Fatalism, whether it be pessimistic or optimistic, is the very antithesis of the Christian spirit. Doors are set open before us in the providence of God to the very end that we should enter them. 'If a man,' wrote Lord Lister, 'is not to take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves to him, what is he to do, or what is he good for?' [1] The answer is that no man is of any use whatever who is not keen to seize the opportunities that present themselves, and ready to enter the doors that are opened. Gladstone, that Herculean toiler, speaks of 'a desire which at times has risen high in my soul, a fervent and a buoyant hope that I might work an energetic work in this world, and by that work (whereof the worker is only God) I might grow into the image of the Redeemer.' [2] It is in such a spirit that great lives are lived and great deeds done.

Now it must surely be felt by every loyal servant of Christ that the unique opportunities of our time are a tremendous challenge to the Church. With wide-open doors confronting her the Church is called to make a great advance. She has the whole world to win. She ought to be carrying the flag into every land. She ought to be rallying all her forces. She should be filled with a Divine discontent with things as they are, and count all that has been already done as but the beginning of greater things. She ought to be straining her resources to the uttermost, and pouring wave after wave of eager volunteers into the far-flung battle line. Yet, what do we see? The Church in many places barely maintaining her ground, uttering

[1] R. J. Godlee, *Lord Lister*, 40.
[2] J. Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, i. 84.

from time to time appeals almost of despair, speaking of retrenchment instead of advance, seeing doors on every hand which she has no strength to enter, fields which she cannot occupy, while multitudes of her people sit in comfortable ease and dull content, heedless and unresponsive. If only the situation were realized, surely these things would be impossible. 'How shall we escape,' says the Apostle, 'if we neglect so great salvation?' And it may well be said, 'How shall the Church of this generation escape the just judgment of God, if in this critical time so great an opportunity be let slip?'

2. And the fact that the opposition is so powerful is only an additional challenge to faith and courage. There are many adversaries by every great and effectual door, and they have to be defied in the name of the Lord, as David defied Goliath. We want more heroic Christianity, more of the spirit of the Crusaders, who in their time and according to their lights gave themselves utterly to the Christian cause; more of the spirit of St Francis, who consecrated the devotion and high courage of mediæval knighthood to the service of Christ.

It is our boast that we are bred of a resolute and adventurous race. Where difficulties were to be overcome and dangers encountered our people have never been found wanting. We hold up to admiration the explorers and pioneers who have gone gladly forth to face stormy seas and Arctic rigours, have crossed swamps and deserts and mountains, ever coveting the place of difficulty and of danger. We recognize that it is they who have carried the bounds of our Empire to the remotest parts of the earth. Is it for nothing that the Almighty has planted such a spirit in the hearts of our people? May we not believe that the Divine intention was that this spirit should be consecrated to the Kingdom of God, that all our native resolution and courage should be thrown into the Christian cause? We are called to fight for Christian ends in Christ's own way, that is, to 'overcome evil with good,' to vanquish hatred by love, and to bear down all opposition by an invincible patience of goodness. 'What a fine field! What a fine field!' Dr Guthrie was heard to say as he looked down from one of the Edinburgh bridges over the crowded closes and wynds that formed part of his parish.[1] It was the difficulty of it that appealed to his courageous spirit. 'What a field! What a field!' may not every Christian say who considers the state of the world to-day? What a great and effectual door is opened before the Church! And what adversaries, what opportunities, what urgency! Is it not a time to be up and doing? John Bunyan, himself a valiant fighter, has given a stirring representation of the Christian spirit in his memorable picture of the man with the very stout countenance who fought his way in at the palace door in the teeth of all opposition. Surely when we consider the critical state of the Church and of the world to-day, when we see the doors so widely open and the adversaries so numerous and strong, we shall not falter nor make any coward's excuse, but shall have stout hearts enough to say, 'Set down my name, sir.'

J. H. Morrison.

[1] J. D. Jones, *If a Man Die*, 203.

Watchfulness

1 Cor. xvi. 13.—'Watch ye.'

'Watch ye.' That is the first charge to the Christian soldier; and it is a charge repeated by nearly every one of the New Testament writers. The need of watchfulness springs from the manifoldness as well as the subtlety of temptation. Temptation is made possible by what is in a man, and it is made real by what is about a man. The susceptibilities to it live within him; the incitements, provocations, inducements, live around him, as it were in the very air he breathes. It is the adaptation of the outer to the inner, and the openness or sensibility of the inner to the outer, that constitutes the strength of temptation and creates the need of watchfulness. The sentinel eye must be at once outward and inward, jealous lest the inner and the outer enemy secretly meet, suddenly agree, and immediately seize and defile the citadel of the soul.

But what does watchfulness mean? It certainly always implies an effort, and therefore something of self-denial; and the form in which that self-denial shows itself is in the being wakeful when we are inclined to sleep. Keep awake, watch. Do not let familiarity become an opiate, putting the senses to sleep. Watchfulness, then, as the first of the Christian soldier's duties, will imply self-denial, self-

discipline, effort. This even the disciples, in spite of the Master's words, did not realize at once. As long as He was with them, danger seemed far removed; and even when the end was near, and the forces of the enemy were gathering round, they were overcome with sleep. Afterwards the infant Church, surrounded as it was by persecuting and malicious foes, learned at least to watch. The need is no less to-day than it was in the early centuries, though men act as if it were so. It is not that they are bad or vicious; they would repudiate at once the wish to be evil; they don't make terms with the enemy, but they leave the gates open, if at the moment they see no enemy near. And yet can we ever say the enemy is not near when we think of the daily and hourly danger to which we are exposed by the very atmosphere in which we live—the literature of the day, the companions we are brought into contact with, the general tone of society? Unbelief, impurity, carelessness of truth, contempt for high ideals in life, evil in every form and every disguise, surround us constantly.

¶ 'I recently visited the Heights of Abraham,' said a friend, 'and looking down those precipitous cliffs which make that the strongest natural citadel in America, I was amazed that Wolfe and his English forces were able to capture it. Speaking to a guardsman, I said, "It would seem as if a band of schoolboys might have held this fort against an army; how did it happen that the French were defeated?" The guard replied, "Oh, the soldiers got careless, overconfident, and pleasure-loving, and one dark night, while they were off guard, the citadel was taken."' 'While off guard' explains many, if not most, failures.[1]

What precaution has our experience taught us to take?

1. It is a fact of experience, if anything is, that while there are many temptations which beset us all, there is generally one which our own individual nature is specially inclined to; which, if we give way to it, seems, as it were, to swallow up all other temptations. At least, if we examine the other temptations, they seem all to converge on the one point: their distinctive character is lost in that of the 'besetting sin,' just as when the plague raged at Athens, all other diseases, we are told, seemed to lead up to and to end in it. What that besetting sin is, each must find out for himself, and watch, not merely against that, but against everything which, in however indirect a way, is associated with it. It may be something quite innocent in itself, quite harmless to another, whose special temptation is of another kind. For us it is fraught with deadly peril. Watch, then, as a soldier on duty. It may be only as the light glancing on an enemy's gun; the enemy may flee directly he is observed; but don't wait to make sure till he gets near enough to master your weapon. If the enemy has once gained an entrance, he will loiter about the old breach, and wait his opportunity. An attack which might be easily repelled elsewhere will be fatal here. The old indulged sin sends its fibres down deep into our very being, and it is long before we can be sure that, though torn up by the roots, it may not have left in the ground that which under favourable conditions will grow again. We may break the bad habit, but there is the old weakness, the old craving, the old desire for sin, whether sensual or refined, which for us means spiritual death. Never let us make another's temptations the measure of our own, or another's strength the gauge of ours; but let us watch.

¶ In a letter to his eldest son Mr Gladstone wrote: 'Give heed to self-examination; use it from time to time: perhaps if used at fixed periodical times, with intervals not too long between them, it will thus be most profitable. It will be of especial use in detecting, and after detection tracking, your besetting sin. When this is found, keep the eye close upon it, follow it up, drag it from its hiding-places, make no terms with it, never remit the pursuit; and so by the grace of God's Holy Spirit may you cast it out. When you have both found what was your besetting sin—that is, the sin *most easily* besetting you—and have by the same grace conquered it, then take the sin which besets you *next most easily*, and deal with it in like manner.'[1]

2. Experience has also taught us that we cannot be too watchful against those sins which we think we have no temptation to commit. It is by these that the penitent too often falls. St Peter knew he was impetuous and impulsive and impatient; but unfaithful to his Lord he

[1] E. N. Hardy.

[1] *Letters on Church and Religion*, ii. 157.

could not be: 'Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.' And e'er the cock crowed, he wept bitterly over a bitter fall. Satan may be a very wicked being, but he is a wonderfully good general, who knows how to use his opportunities. He will not long waste his power on the part which you know is weak, where all your sentries have been doubled, but he will turn to that where you think yourself secure, where you never have been attacked. Never say, I have my faults and my besetting sins, but at least this will never be one. When such a thought suggests itself, let us be on our guard. It is there that the enemy may be about to attack.

¶ Six centuries before Christ the rich Lydian king, Crœsus, imagined himself safe in Sardis, with its perpendicular rock fifteen hundred feet in height. But there was a fissure in the rock which gave foothold to careful climbers advancing in single file, and in his vain confidence Crœsus neglected to watch this point, until one night the besieging army of Cyrus advanced up the dangerous cliff, and by morning the fortress was captured and the Lydian empire broken.[1]

3. Again, experience has taught us to be especially watchful when any special effort has been made, or any victory won by the power of God in us, when we have felt God's nearness, and been for the moment lifted up above the ordinary life of conflict.

There is a Japanese proverb which says: 'Victor, tighten thy helmet-strap.' The suggestion underlying such a saying is that there is need after victory for those who have been victorious to stand on guard. It may be that the proverb, having currency at the outset amongst primitive peoples, wanted to warn men lest, after a victorious fight, their adversary, whom they supposed to be utterly overthrown, might spring upon them off guard.

After the exaltation of victory there often comes a mood of necessary reaction, and it safeguards us from the dangers of such a time to know that there is nothing dishonourable, nothing mean or weak, in being tired. As we enter into any period of such tiredness we should pray God to take care of us in those hours when we have called in our sentries. The Bible has many an illustration of this mood coming over people. It was after a day which ended in a great triumph—it was then, and within the soul of a man like Elijah, that this kind of total collapse took place. We read that after ridding his country of the prophets of Baal, of the exponents, that is to say, of grossness and sensuality, after being an instrument by which God vindicated Himself to that little world of Israel, Elijah went away into the wilderness, entered into a cave, lay down, and asked God that he might die.

¶ I suppose one of the strongest and bravest men who ever walked earth was Martin Luther. It needed a man of almost superhuman strength and courage to do the work he did. I think of him, for instance, riding to that Congress in Worms in face of the warnings and appeals of his friends, saying with a kind of gay and reckless courage that he would go, though there were as many devils in Worms as there were tiles upon the roof-tops; and he reminds me of the kind of courage Elijah showed when he faced the priests of Baal and an apostate people and a murderous king and queen on Carmel. But I follow Luther to the Wartburg, and in his friendly imprisonment there I find the erstwhile brave and fearless man full of nervousness and timidities, flinging his ink-pot at imaginary devils, a prey to depression and weakness and fear.[1]

Even our blessed Lord experienced—never, of course, in the region of His principles—some such fall in the temperature of His spirit. At least, so we may most reverently interpret the incident of the Temptation. This thing which we call the Temptation, a mood in which certain lower voices made themselves heard outside the door of our Lord's spirit, came upon Him immediately after that ecstasy at the Jordan, when He had publicly committed Himself to His career, and God had approved of Him by the descent of the dove. Again and again we read that *after* some deep engagement of His spirit our Lord rested Himself, and met the inevitable reaction in a deliberate and conscious communion with God.[2]

On the other hand, this temptation after victory may meet a mood of elation. Then the tempter will praise you for your resolution, compliment you on the strength you have shown, soothe you to sleep like Samson in

[1] J. S. Corlett, *Christ and the Churches*, 101.

[1] J. D. Jones.

[2] J. A. Hutton, *On Accepting Ourselves*, 188.

Delilah's lap, and then rob you of that in which your strength lay, your trust in God. He will make a feigned retreat, as if we had vanquished him. We are left for a moment in all the bliss of restored union with God. Let us be doubly watchful then.

¶ Dr Jowett tells how one day, when walking with Hugh Price Hughes, the latter suddenly stopped, and, gripping his friend's arm in his impulsive way, said: 'Jowett, the Christian preacher is always on the brink of the abyss!'

It must still be said that it is not enough to watch the enemy, we must watch ourselves. Mere opportunity does not make sin, if there is not consent of the will to evil. Therefore, let us watch ourselves—our conscience, that it be sensitive, ready to vibrate to the touch of God; our practice, that it be right, truly conformed to the law of God; our motives, that they are pure, seeking first and before all the will of God; our affections, that they stretch ever upwards and onwards till they rest in God.

'Keep thine heart,' says the Wise Man, 'above all keeping'; 'Give me thine heart,' said Christ, and it is the heart which instinctively bids us answer—Lord Thou hast made me for Thyself. My heart knoweth no rest till it attain to Thee.

Here is the heart's true bulwark found!
And here is rest secure;
And here is love's most certain ground,
And here salvation sure.

Bugle Notes

An Address to Boy Scouts and Girl Guides

1 Cor. xvi. 13.—'Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.'

The boy makes the man, and St Paul, the great Apostle, gives us in these four crisp sentences, that ring out like bugle notes, the secret of the making of manhood: watchfulness, faithfulness, courage, and strength—these are the things that we need and have to try to win.

1. *Watchfulness.*—The Scout must be keen, alert, wide-awake. He must learn to use his eyes and ears and be ready for every emergency or requirement. He must notice things round him and learn to turn simple things to use.

¶ Have you read Kipling's book, *Kim*? The story tells how Kim, when a boy, was trained to have the eyesight that notices. He was sent up to Simla and there he was put in the charge of an extraordinary man, called Lurgan Sahib, who taught him how to see. Kim and a little native lad were set to play what they called 'the jewel game.' Lurgan Sahib would make a collection of small objects, such as precious stones, and he would give both boys a look at them, and then he would ask them to describe the stones from memory. At first the little Hindu boy always beat Kim at the game. But in the end Kim learned to play the game of noticing so magnificently that when he grew older he was able to do most valuable work for the British Government.

You must keep your eyes wide open if you are going to make the best of life. It takes both eyes and mind to make a good cricketer or a good Scout, and what is true of games is true also of character. The Scout law sets a fine ideal; for you aim 'to help others and to do at least one good turn every day.' Don't look for anything great, but just ask yourself, 'what good thing shall I do to-day?' It may be going up to a new boy at school who is standing in the playground feeling rather out of things, or running an errand for a busy neighbour, or collecting for some of your funds. Of course there are always difficulties and disappointments, but you will try to take these with a smile as you do in your games. And there will be temptations as well. There are what Shackleton called 'crevasses with their coats on'—that is, openings in the ice so covered with snow that the danger is not easily seen, and unless you are watching you will find yourselves in certain danger.

2. *Faithfulness.*—One is our King, even Jesus, and we must be loyal to Him. If we are to be loyal, we must honour His laws. It is easy to sing these fine words about 'marching at the king's command,' but it is not so easy to live up to them. Do you remember Tennyson's words:

Follow the Christ, the King,
Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the King—
Else, wherefore born?

Never be ashamed of Christ your King. The Scout is not ashamed of his uniform, nor the Guide of hers. They believe it stands for something good. As you need your billy-can and your water-bottle on a long day's march, so you will need the help of God when you have to meet your difficulties.

¶ Henry Drummond was one of the men whose memory is cherished in Scotland. Perhaps some of you have read a book of his called *Baxter's Second Innings*, which has helped thousands of boys. When he was dying Henry Drummond asked a friend to sing to him a favourite hymn, and the hymn was :

I'm not asham'd to own my Lord,
or to defend his cause,
Maintain the glory of his cross,
and honour all his laws.

You will find when you grow up and go out into the world that it will often be very difficult not to be disloyal to Christ. When your companions taunt you about your religion, when they laugh at you and call you a coward because you will not join them in some scheme which you know to be wrong, then is the time to set your teeth and say to yourself, 'No matter what happens I will be loyal. I will, I will.'

¶ When the French were invading Russia at the beginning of last century they arrived at a small village. All the inhabitants had fled save one peasant—a woodman, judging from the axe in his belt. The officer in command of the French troops ordered the man to be shot. The soldiers raised their muskets and prepared to fire, but the peasant coolly looked down the barrels of the guns and never flinched. The officer was so struck with the man's courage that he commanded the firing-party to lower their muskets, and spare the prisoner's life. 'But,' said he, 'we shall put a mark upon him.' They made a branding iron red-hot and placed it on the peasant's hand. When they removed it something was left there. 'What is that?' asked the woodman. 'That,' said the officer, 'is an N. for Napoleon. You belong to him now.' The man turned, placed the branded hand on a solid place, took his axe from his belt, and with one stroke severed the hand from his arm. 'There now!' cried he, 'there is not one bit of me that does not belong to the Czar.'

3. *Courage.*—It is not only men and boys who can be brave. The Great War showed us that girls can be wonderfully brave too. Do you know the name of Betty Stevenson? Betty Stevenson was a young English girl who went out to Étaples at the beginning of the War. Étaples was one of the largest centres of hospitals. When a soldier was badly wounded his relatives were allowed to go out to France and visit him, and Betty Stevenson's work was to meet the boats at Boulogne with a motor and drive the relatives the seventeen miles along the road to Étaples. In the summer of 1918 the Germans began to bomb the camp, and in one hospital a great many people were killed, and the danger was so great that most of the French people in the village left it. Betty could easily have gone home, for she had served a long time, but she went on driving her car to the boats just the same. And then one evening she was so busy all day that she was too late in leaving the village—for the air raids were worst at night—and she was caught before she could get to the shelter of the wood. Quite near her a bomb fell and a splinter killed her instantaneously. Two days later she was buried with full military honours as an officer of the British Army.[1]

The kind of courage which Betty Stevenson showed is usually called physical courage, and some of you may have chances of exercising that. But there is another kind called moral courage, and if you have that you have always a chance of using it. Betty had that kind of courage too. One way she showed her moral courage was by obeying orders. There was an order that the drivers of motor cars were not to leave them unattended. Often she had to wait hours at one of the hospitals until the father or mother she had driven there was ready to leave their wounded son, and it was often very cold. The officers used to come out and ask her to come into the mess and sit by the warm fire, and perhaps have dinner or listen to a concert. Sometimes the other drivers broke the rules and went in, but though Betty was the youngest—only twenty-one—she never once broke the rule. It seems as though there might not have been much harm in going in just once, and that is how it seems with lots of things. But what is needed is courage to resist—not only when you see that the thing is clearly wrong, for often

[1] *Betty Stevenson, Y.M.C.A.*

it has got too great a hold on you then, but right at the beginning, when you suspect that this is something you should not do.

4. *Strength.*—The last bugle note sounded in our text calls us to be strong. We all admire strength, whether physical or as indicating power of will. Here is a call to you then. Be strong! If you do the first three things that we have mentioned—if you are watchful and faithful and brave—then you will be strong. For strength is like a cord woven out of these three strands. You will make mistakes, no doubt, and come a cropper now and then, but you will rise again and try once more. Never be downhearted, but remember that you are workers on God's side.

¶ 'Why should I fear?' said General Gordon. 'Is man stronger than God? I go up to the Soudan alone with an infinite almighty God to direct and guide me, and am glad to so trust Him as to fear nothing and indeed to feel sure of success.'

Be strong!
We are not here to play, to dream, to drift,
We have hard work to do, and loads to lift,
Shun not the struggle, face it, 'tis God's gift.
Be strong!

Be strong!
Say not the days are evil—who's to blame?
And fold the hands, and acquiesce—O shame!
Stand up, speak out, and bravely in God's name,
Be strong!

Manliness

1 Cor. xvi. 13.—'Quit you like men.'

As in many other places in the Epistles and Gospels these words are borrowed from the Old Testament. We read in Samuel that they were the battle-cry of the Philistines. St Paul appropriates them here, knowing that these Corinthians were on a battlefield, bloodless, but hard and grim enough. They were a handful of soldiers in a city of idolaters. They were warring against mighty odds, and they had traitors and weaklings in their own company—men who professed the faith, and denied it. Heresy and even immorality had crept into their ranks, and there were divisions where there ought to have been unity. Not an easy fight that! They would have quite enough to do to hold their ground; plenty of call for watching and sentinel's business, and prayer, and firm grip of their weapons. And to them St Paul addresses this fine exhortation, which is just as good and needful for the Christian host of to-day as it was for them: 'Quit you like men.' 'Play the man!'

1. Can we come to an agreement as to the nature of manliness? What is Christian manliness? It is not easy to define it, but sensible people know a little of its characteristics without definition. It means certain qualities of heart, and a certain robustness of character, self-mastery, self-control; a superiority to weak passions and indulgences; a courage that can face hard work and difficulties, and is not easily beaten and turned back; a patience that can hold on its way, and does not whine and fret at every rebuff and disappointment; a heart that can battle with sorrow, that is full of kindness and compassion towards others. There is always a great volume of tenderness in the real man; tenderness and sympathy, and human love, and a capacity for forgetting himself in helping others. He is a true, staunch friend, on whom you can lean. He is one who sticks closer than a brother, and never goes back from his pledge and promise. And he has a mind, and knows his own mind, and does not easily change and yield his ground when the popular voice is against him. That is something like the picture of manliness which St Paul was constantly holding up to the view of others, and looking at himself. For it was something like the living picture which he had seen in the Divinest and highest type of man—the man Christ Jesus.

¶ K'ang Yu Wei, the Chinese reformer who had to flee for his life from Peking in 1898, was asked what he thought was the most striking quality in Jesus. He had made a profound study of the Gospels, and his reply was that 'what appealed to him most in the personality of Jesus was His courage—the manliness which could so quietly and dauntlessly face the hatred of so many of His fellow-countrymen, the fierce enmity of the proud Pharisees, and, above all, the certainty of death, and of the outward failure of His mission; the courage which undertook a work so constructive, the valour

which could make and could ask from others such large sacrifices.'

How do we see this working out in the early followers of the Christ? Timid and shrinking at the outset, they became lion-like in their courage, so that whether it was Peter and John before the Sanhedrin, Stephen before his murderers, or Paul before the Roman Emperor, the one fact which cannot but impress the impartial observer is the strong, stalwart manliness they displayed, an honour to their Master, and an example to the world. We greatly mistake, therefore, if we ever imagine that Christianity stifles manliness, that the exercise of faith detracts from the finest and most admirable qualities of our common manhood.

¶ There is a religion of service, of valour, as well as of sadness and suffering. We have degraded our religion by pandering to the appetite for comfort. There is a selfish, indulgent form of religion. We must be warriors—we must be wounded in the fight. All religion is not a tender kind of sick-nursing. Comfort is not lullaby and opiate, but to be strong together with God. Men have had a very wrong standard of manliness. We are to make great sacrifices—to face great wrongs—to face the dragon in his den—to face death. We are to have the martyr spirit in us—to forget self and our own sufferings. The martyr did more by dying than by living. The measureless, unspeakable love of God calls you to valiant service. There are gems amongst the rubbish of humanity which need to be brought out and fashioned for the Saviour's crown.[1]

Manliness consists in a true heart and honest mind, in a high conception and a resolute performance of duty combined with a sound ideal of the dignity of human life and the glory of human destiny. How strange the contrast between the thoughts which that word must have raised in the mind of St Paul's hearers and those which it would have called up if uttered by one of their civil rulers. How different a thing had manhood become to the Christian from what it was before his conversion. The thought that their life had been lived by the Son of God, the thought that their nature had been worn by Christ, that their bodily form had been sanctified by God's indwelling presence, how overpowering must this have been to the first believers. In following His life they knew wherein true manhood lay; they knew that it was not in the practice of the conventional virtues of the society around them, not in striking, brilliant exhibitions of their own great powers of mind or body, but in the simple daily life of industry and effort, that the perfection of human nature was to be found. Christ had revealed to His followers the sufficiency, the grandeur, of common life; within the sphere of daily duty can the highest individual perfection be found. We need not go beyond that wherever we may be; we need not make efforts to find a specially fitting sphere for the development of the Christian life. The Apostle would say, Become all that you can become, take your human nature, and in Christ's strength raise it as high as it will go; work on in the conditions in which you are placed till you have wrought through them into higher and still higher ones; examine your position such as it is, and try to advance beyond it, consider your duties, such as they are, and try to do them thoroughly, knowing that other and more important ones lie beyond; let there be no shirking, no cowardliness, no empty boasting, no fair professions not borne out by acts; be men, sanctify your human nature, and work in its strength.

Thou wouldst be Hero? Wait not then supinely
For fields of fine romance which no day brings.
The finest life lies oft in doing finely
A multitude of unromantic things.

The heroism of thy true endeavour
Shall gild the common-place of common days,
And God Himself shall guard thy work for ever,
And crown it with eternity of praise.[1]

2. Dean Farrar once said, 'Any fool, the weakest, dullest, paltriest that ever was, can make a drunkard or a debauchee. There is no human clay so vile, no sludge of humanity so despicable but out of it you can make an effeminate corrupter or a lying schemer: but it takes God's own gold to make a man.' The school of Christ forms character, and sends out men and women fitted for the world's work—not sentimentalists, but men with fibre and

[1] J. L. Paton, *John Brown Paton*, 359.

[1] E. C. Lefroy.

grit, and heroic patience, and cross-bearing, and staying power.

Christ is always making men of this kind, men who become a strength and help to others. Some, indeed, tower above us and shelter us. As the prophet Isaiah said, 'A man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.' A man—any man, every man who is strong enough to stand—becomes an oasis in the arid waste of experience for those who in themselves cannot withstand the sweep of the tempest. To break the force of social temptation, and check the power of vice and materialism, God provides men who shall stand like rocks. This is what the world needs—men who will stand up against the current and afford shelter to weaker brothers who go down in the flood. There are many echoes, many followers, but you cannot be a rock in the desert and do merely what some one else does. Some one is leaning on us, no matter who we are. Not every soul can be a towering cliff, but every one can lift his head high enough to shelter some one weaker than himself. What is it that attracts us in strong men? Is it not just this—our sense of security in their mastery of the storms of life? Refreshing lives are always strong. Such lives enrich, fertilize the thirsty land, and the contagion of their strength makes weaker men rise to their own higher powers of efficiency.

¶ Of William, Prince of Orange, Motley says: 'He went through life bearing the load of a people's sorrows upon his shoulders with a smiling face. Their name was the last word upon his lips, save the simple affirmative, with which the soldier who had been battling for the right all his lifetime, commended his soul in dying to "his great captain, Christ." The people were grateful and affectionate, for they trusted the character of their "Father William," and not all the clouds which calumny could collect ever dimmed to their eyes the radiance of that lofty mind to which they were accustomed, in their darkest calamities, to look for light. As long as he lived, he was the guiding-star of a brave nation, and when he died the little children cried in the streets.' [1]

3. And after all the toil and turmoil of life, what is the supreme value that makes the living worth while? Is it not in the reaction which we get out of the life that we live? Every man gets some reaction from the life that he lives. The politician gets power, the actor gets applause, the captain of industry gets organized results. And the man who stands as a shelter in the time of storm, what does he get? He gets the reaction from the lives that he has helped. And there is in all life no sweeter, no more completely satisfying reward than the reaction from hearts that you have helped. This it is that keeps men on the mission field far from home and comforts. This keeps men steady to the most disagreeable tasks. This richly repays a mother for all the years of toil and anxiety. No reward comes back to us from the experiences of life that so thoroughly repays all that life has cost us as the satisfaction of knowing that we have been of use to some one else.

Quit you like men, this is the Apostle's exhortation. The manly is one of the tokens of the Christly. A big manliness is the sign and witness of a big faith, and bears its testimony to the dynamic of God's grace. 'More men? More man! It's there we fail.'

Gird your loins about with truth;
Life will not go always smooth,
Singing lightsome songs of youth:
Play the man!

Learn with justice to keep pace,
Spurning what is vile and base,
And bravely ever set your face
To play the man.

Fear not what the world may say,
Hold the strait and narrow way,
In the open light of day.
And play the man.

It needeth courage to be true,
And patiently the right to do,
Loving him that wrongeth you—
Play the man! [1]

[1] *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*, iii. 480.

[1] W. C. Smith.

Spiritual Strength

1 Cor. xvi. 13.—'Be strong.'

'Be strong.' The man who exhorts us in this fashion well illustrates the intimate connection between a man's character and his view of life. He conceives life as he lives it. As he himself is in moral quality and in spiritual endeavour such will life seem to him to be. Life, for the Apostle, had not been soft and pleasant, a stream of delicious sweetnesses or desires felt only to be gratified, but had been full of trouble and change—a succession of shocks to faith and disappointments to hope. Think of him as he came up to Jerusalem, a young man of buoyant faith and large hopefulness and strong convictions. He does not so much hold them as they hold him. You can measure the strength of his convictions by two things—the control they exercised over his mind and conduct, and the suffering it cost him to change them. When Paul became a Christian it was not an easy change. It left scars upon his soul so deep that they never healed over. His whole life is coloured and determined by those early convictions and the conflicts and struggle of the change. Trouble comes to him from every side. The men he had left hate him, for he was their lost leader, though he had not left them for honour, or for a ribbon, or to have a button to stick in his coat. On the contrary, because of it he had to endure shame and sorrow, to meet and bear persecution. Yet while they hated, he did not, like the apostate, repay hatred with deeper hate, but he loved, so loved that he was ready to give himself unto death for his brethren. And, after making his great renunciation, how was he received by the men whose faith he had embraced? Suspicion waited on him, recognition was denied him, and neglect was the kindliest attitude assumed. But at last discovery came with Barnabas, and the way to his great work was opened up. Yet even then all was not comfort and confidence. His faith was too large for the men in office. He had to withstand Peter; and even Barnabas, the man he trusted, his true yoke-fellow, fell away and deserted him in his hour of trial. More, the churches that he had planted, the men that he converted, allowed themselves to be led away from the larger faith, and some said, as at Corinth, 'I am of Paul,' or 'I of Apollos.' But none of these things made him forget his faith or leave his duty unfulfilled. And so when he came to give from his own experience his last lesson to the men he loved, what more fitting lesson could it be than this message of steadfastness, 'Quit you like men, be strong'?

1. It would seem, at first sight, as if only an artificial distinction could be drawn between those two injunctions, 'Quit you like men,' 'Be strong.' But, looking more closely into the meaning of the words, we find that, not only are they not synonymous, they do not even overlap. The Greek word translated 'quit you like men,' a word which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, has an obvious and definite meaning. It is an appeal to self-respect, and a call to us to show forth our moral strength. The word translated 'be strong,' on the other hand, in the only three other passages in which it is used, definitely refers to a different kind of strength. Twice it is used of our Lord Himself growing in spirit, and once it is used by St Paul in the Epistle to the Ephesians, in the phrase, 'strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.' The word thus becomes almost synonymous with another favourite word of St Paul's constantly translated by the English, 'strengthened,' and always with reference to Divine strength. Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. It refers definitely to that strength which made St Paul himself strong for his work, even as spiritual heroes in all ages 'out of weakness were made strong.'

Men glory in their strength, and even fitness of body seemed ever to the Apostle one ingredient in his estimate of true manliness. What can exceed the fervour of that prayer that 'your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ'? Then there is intellectual and moral strength, which is a still finer thing, the strength of a clear and vigorous mind, well equipped and well disciplined. These qualities are not excluded from the Apostle's view, but it is not to them that he is mainly referring. He is speaking especially of spiritual strength.

2. What are the elements which constitute the strength of the Christian man?

To begin with, he is strong in the defences of

his soul. His mind has been enlightened and his conscience has been cleansed. Above all, he has received the Spirit of Christ, and is thus endowed with a more than natural strength in the inner regions of his being. His defences are strong because his heart is pure. He stands in unyielding antagonism to evil in all its forms, opposing it with the consent of all his faculties.

He is strong, again, in the loyalties of his heart. He is knit in the bonds of a deathless gratitude and devotion to the Lord who redeemed him, and has become 'a thrall to His enchantments.' And, he is strong in the enthusiasms of his spirit. He is fired with a zeal for the noblest of all causes, the cause of Christ's Kingdom in the world, and he has courage to dare and suffer on its behalf.

¶ 'Real religion,' says Dr Grenfell—and his own life has been a magnificent illustration of the statement—'real religion involves real courage.' 'Life,' he elsewhere says, 'is always, everywhere, a real, tough, courageous fight, with daily opportunities, to which are added all the fun of achievement and all the glories of a conqueror.'

3. The Christian life is indeed a long warfare, in which the believer must put forth his strength to the end. Temptation, as some one has said, is the one thing that a man can never escape from. Its methods of approach present an endless variety. Often it comes in the form of those 'fleshly lusts which war against the soul.' But sometimes its assaults are more insidious because their real character is less easily discerned. There is the temptation, for example, to sacrifice spiritual aspiration for an ignoble ambition; to surrender the integrity of the soul for an earthly prize. Against all those influences which contend for the mastery with the grace of God in his heart the soldier of Jesus Christ must wage an unceasing warfare. There is also, however, a wider field of conflict in which he must put forth his strength. He is called to the warfare of the Kingdom of God in the earth, and has his part to play in the task of winning the world for his Lord. And the world cannot be won without conflict. There are forces of wickedness that are entrenched in it on every side—iniquities and impurities that have the sanction of immemorial custom, social wrongs that are established by decree, falsenesses and insincerities that brazen it out in the light of noonday, malignant corruptions that eat as a canker into the life of the community. The energies of the strong man are enlisted against every manifestation of falsehood and impurity and injustice.

¶ In one of Tennyson's Idylls we have the portrait of Gareth, one of Christ's knights, who rides forth on his quest with a glad and fearless heart, and refuses to admit the possibility of defeat. And in the great adventure of his life the poet represents him overthrowing four knights who defended the fords of the river which lay between him and his goal. The first was called the Morning-Star, the second Noon-Sun, the third the Evening-Star, and the fourth Night and Death. These, according to the unmistakable symbolism of the poem, represent the forces of evil which assail the life of the follower of Christ at successive stages of his spiritual history.

Gareth's victory over his first opponent was comparatively easy: youthful faith and devotion have little difficulty in conquering the temptations which are peculiar to the morning of life. But the subsequent conflicts became increasingly difficult. The sins of middle-life and of advancing age are harder to slay; and when Gareth fought the Knight of the Evening-Star he panted hard, and

> He seem'd as one
> That all in later, sadder age begins
> To war against ill uses of a life,
> But these from all his life arise, and cry,
> 'Thou hast made us lords, and canst not put us down!'

But in the end he prevails over all his opponents—even the last enemy, Death.[1]

4. What is the secret of victory in the day of battle, and of endurance in the lifelong conflict? In one word it is 'Christ in us'; Christ formed in us, our lower self subdued, our higher self taken into God. 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'

¶ It is sometimes said, You tell us to be manly, and yet you bid us subject ourselves to a higher power working in us. Religious people have no self-reliance. They are but feeble creatures, after all, with all their boasted strength. How

[1] A. Stewart, in *The Free Church Pulpit*, 12.

can you expect men to set before themselves, as an end, what, disguise it as you will, is self-surrender, which means renouncing all that we admire as manly in us. I will answer by some negative instances sufficient, at all events, to prove that surrendering one's self to the will of God, resting on His strength, is a source not of weakness but of power. Was St Paul feeble and nerveless because his will was surrendered to the will of Christ? Did he speak less powerfully, or run less certainly, or fight as 'one that beateth the air,' because he had learned to say, 'Not I, but Christ in me'? Are enthusiasts of all ages and all creeds, fanatics, if you will, wanting in force and energy, because they believe themselves to be only instruments in the hands of some mightier power? [1]

And what about ourselves? Do we walk the less firmly through the darkness, because our eye is fixed upon a Light that never flickers, never is obscured, because we have ceased to follow those wandering fires which are but the exhalations from the swamp of self-love and self-indulgence and self-gratification? No; we all know something of the meaning of the paradox, 'When I am weak, then am I strong.' It is the surrender of self to Him who 'saveth not with sword or spear,' which gives real strength. 'Without him we can do nothing,' but we can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us. This is the strength which shows itself in great endurance, which, in olden days, made even the weakness of women strong to face the fires of martyrdom. In quietness and confidence they could dare to wait for the victory. For the battle they were fighting was the battle of the Lord, and the strength in which they fought was the strength of Him who is stronger than the strong.

Aquila and Priscilla

1 Cor. xvi. 19.—'Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.'

Even in the scanty notices which we have of this husband and wife, there are many interesting points and instructive lessons.

Aquila was a Jew of Pontus—a remote Roman province by the shores of the Black Sea. Whether Priscilla was a Jewess we do not know. Her name is Roman, but that does not decide as to her race, for Jewish men, at all events, frequently bore Latin names. If she was not a Jewess by birth, we have in her case a mixed marriage, such as was not uncommon, and of which Timothy's parents give an example. She is sometimes called Prisca, which is the correct form of the name, and of which Priscilla is an affectionate diminutive. The couple had been living in Rome, and had been banished from that city by Claudius, as Jews have been hounded out of every country in Europe. From there they had come to Corinth, possibly *en route* to Aquila's native Pontus, where they met Paul, and their lives were revolutionized. Their association with him was at first a purely business connection; they went into partnership as tent-makers, a craft of which one principal seat was Paul's native Cilicia. But as they sat at their work, there would be many earnest talks about the Christ, and the power of Paul's teaching and the magnetic influence of his great personality drew both husband and wife to Jesus. The bond thus knit was too close to be easily severed; and so, when Paul returned across the Ægean to Ephesus, his two new friends kept with him, which they would be the more ready to do as they had no settled home, and a move to Ephesus would be bringing them nearer Pontus. They remained with Paul during his somewhat prolonged stay in the great Asiatic city, but when the Apostle left Ephesus their companionship seems to have ended; and we next hear of them in the Epistle to the Romans, in which they are saluted as resident again in Rome. We catch one more glimpse of them in Paul's last letter (II Tim.). At that supreme moment, with death staring him in the face, his heart goes out to his two old friends, and he sends them a parting token of his undying love. Such is all that we know of Aquila and Priscilla. Can we gather any lessons from these scattered notices thus thrown together?

1. We find in them a notable example of the effect of Christianity in hallowing domestic life and wedded love. Such a couple, and a couple in which the wife took the foremost place, was an absolute impossibility in heathenism. They are a specimen of what Christianity did in the primitive age all over the Empire, and has done ever since—lifted woman to her proper place.

[1] A. L. Moore, *Some Aspects of Sin*, 49.

These two, yoked together in 'all exercise of noble end,' helping one another in Christian work, and bracketed together by the Apostle as his fellow-helpers in Christ Jesus, stand before us as a living picture of what our sweet and sacred family life and earthly loves may become if the light from heaven shines upon them, and glorifies them.

These two had 'a church in their house.' It was centuries after their time before there were buildings exclusively devoted to public worship. So Aquila and Priscilla had some room—perhaps the workshop where the tents were stitched—spacious enough for part of the brethren of the city in which they might be to meet in. The meeting may have been small in number and devoid of organization, but Paul has no scruple in calling it a church. That not only gives us a glimpse into the primitive simplicity of the early worship, but puts a stringent question to all of us as to what our homes are. Fathers and mothers, who are responsible for the religious atmosphere of their homes, may ask themselves if anyone would see there a house with a church in it.

¶ From the age of seventeen James Paton—the father of the illustrious missionary—conducted family worship, first in the home of his parents, and afterwards in his own. 'And so,' says his distinguished son, writing many years later, 'and so began in his seventeenth year that blessed custom of family prayer, morning and evening, which my father practised, probably without one single avoidable omission, till he lay on his death-bed, seventy-seven years of age; when, even to the last day of his life, a portion of the Scripture was read; and his voice was heard softly joining in the psalm, and his lips breathed the morning and evening prayer—falling in sweet benediction on the heads of all his children, far away many of them all over the earth, but all meeting him there at the Throne of Grace. None of us can remember that any day ever passed unhallowed thus; no hurry for market, no rush to business, no arrival of friends or guests, no trouble or sorrow, no joy or excitement, ever prevented us from at least kneeling around the family altar, while the high priest led our prayers to God, and offered himself and his children there. And blessed to others as well as to ourselves was the light of such example.' [1]

[1] F. W. Boreham, *A Reel of Rainbow*, 197.

¶ It is the church *in* the house that makes the church *outside* the house. Luther has truly said, 'The hearth is the centre of religion.' If the fire is feeble there, it is not likely to be warm anywhere else. What our land needs most to-day is 'the church in the house.' An English poet once sang of Scotland:

O Scotland, much I love thy tranquil dales;
But most on Sabbath eves, when low the sun
Slants through the upland copse, 'tis my delight,
Wandering and stopping oft, to hear the song
Of kindred praise arise from humble roof. [1]

2. We may gather, further, an object-lesson as to the hallowing of common life, trade, and travel. It does not appear that, after their stay in Ephesus, these two were closely associated with Paul, and certainly they were not among what we may call his evangelistic staff. Nor do they appear to have met him again after that time. Their gipsy life was probably forced on them by the exigencies of Aquila's trade. When he had made tents in Ephesus for a while, he moved on somewhere else, looking for work. Yet Paul continues to call them his 'fellow-workers in Christ Jesus.' No matter whether it was in Corinth or Ephesus or Rome, these two carried Jesus Christ with them where they went, and while they were plying their trade were also preaching Christ.

3. But Aquila and Priscilla are also a brilliant example of the heroic self-devotion which is kindled by true Christian faith. 'For my sake,' says the Apostle, 'they laid down their own necks.' We do not know to what incident he refers; possibly it may be the riot in the theatre at Ephesus, in which he was in great danger, and which made a deep impression on him. But the language seems both more emphatic and more specific than that incident would warrant. Probably it was at some serious juncture of which we know nothing, one of those 'deaths oft,' the mention of which was but once forced from the Apostle, that these two, the brave woman and her husband, offered themselves as victims in his stead. The sacrifice was not accepted, but Paul felt the heroism of it in his deepest heart, and not he only, but 'all the churches of the Gentiles'—as well they

[1] W. Mackintosh Mackay, *Bible Types of Modern Women*, 266.

might. That magnanimous self-surrender was a wonderful token of passionate admiration and love towards the Apostle; but its deepest motive was a yet deeper love to the Apostle's Master.

4. There is one thing more. We may draw from their history a suggestion as to the unexpected issues of little things. A complicated chain of circumstances had one of its ends fastened round the Apostle, and the other round the husband and wife. It steadily drew them nearer and nearer, till they met, strangers, but destined to be inseparably linked together from that moment. Claudius had banished the Jews from Rome in some whim of absolute power, or from one of the spasms of needless fear which avenge humanity on despots. So the couple were uprooted, and floated like driftwood to Corinth. We do not know why they went thither, and perhaps they did not know, but God knew. And while they were thus being brought from the West, the Apostle was, in like unconscious ways, being pushed thither from the East. He had been 'forbidden of the Holy Ghost to speak the word in Asia'; and, driven across the sea to Macedonia, he was banished from Philippi and Thessalonica and Berœa, and left Athens, having done little there, and so at last found himself in Corinth, face to face with the tent-maker from Rome and his wife. Who proposed the partnership in business we know not, but, whichever did so, the connection could not have been meant to be lasting. They 'rough-hewed' the ends, but God 'shaped' them.

We may learn the lesson that, in the infinite complexity of events, and the inextricable tangle of results ever growing and interlacing, like the undergrowth of tropical forests, we shall do little good by trying to force our own way through the jungle, we can see but a small space ahead, therefore we need not worry ourselves by forecasting. We shall be wisest if we trust God, and be sure that the Force which is pushing us is impelling us in the right direction, and that, if we yield to its gentle, firm guidance, we shall be brought by 'the right'—though it may be a roundabout—'way to the City of Habitation.'

¶ A young surgeon, fresh from his classes in the University of Edinburgh, became a candidate for the situation of medical man in the small village of Inverkip, on the Clyde. He was not selected, and he said, after he had risen to fame, that perhaps he felt a deeper measure of chagrin and disappointment over this failure than he ever experienced at any time during his subsequent career. But he also added that, had he been chosen, he would probably have spent his whole life as a village doctor at Inverkip. The Lord, however, had much useful and brilliant work for him to do in a larger field. His name was James Young Simpson; and Sir James will long be remembered in the annals of medicine not only as a beloved physician, but also as a great personality, who courageously fought and won the battle of the application of chloroform to the relief of human suffering.[1]

¶ *Why does the swallow migrate?*—How does the swallow know when to turn its face to the ocean? How does it know in which direction to go? I do not know. And, what is more, the swallow does not know! Yes, that is the beauty of it—the swallow does not know. You tell me that the swallow knows *instinctively*. But what is instinct? You do not explain a thing, or lessen its mystery, by giving it a name.

A fire mist and a planet,
A crystal and a cell,
A jelly-fish and a saurian,
And a cave where the cave-men dwell;
Then a sense of law and beauty,
A face turned from the clod—
Some call it Evolution,
And others call it God.

It is better—far better—to call it God and be done with it. And, in exactly the same way, there is this wondrous force that guides the swallow:

Some people call it instinct,
And others call it God.

It is better, I repeat, to call it God. Far better. Now at this point the study of the swallow becomes of vast importance to me. For in many respects I am very like the swallow. I move through life guided by a force that I cannot explain. By what strange impulse was I impelled to follow this profession—this and no other? By what freak of fate did I marry

[1] C. Jerdan.

this wife—this and no other? By what stroke of fortune did I settle in this land—this and no other? Looking back on life, it seems almost like a drift; we seem to have reached this position by the veriest chance. And yet it has all turned out too well to be the result of chance. The fact is that like the swallow we acted instinctively. And that instinct was God! We say with Browning's *Paracelsus*:

I see my way as birds their trackless way.
I shall arrive! what time, what circuit first,
I ask not: but unless God send his hail
Or blinding fireballs, sleet or stifling snow,
In some time, his good time, I shall arrive:
He guides me and the bird. In his good time![1]

Anathema

1 Cor. xvi. 22.—'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema.'

The Greek word 'anathema' means that which is hung up in the temple in token of the fact that it has been devoted to the Gods. Its use in the New Testament arises from its use in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, where it is employed for persons and things that, in a peculiar sense, were set apart and devoted to God. In the story of the conquest of Canaan, for instance, we read of Jericho and other places, persons, or things that were, as our Version somewhat unfortunately renders it, 'accursed,' or, as it ought rather to be rendered, 'devoted.' And this 'devotion' was of such a sort that the things or persons devoted were doomed to destruction. The underlying idea was that evil things brought into contact with God were necessarily destroyed. That being the meaning of the word, it is clear that its use by the Apostle is metaphorical, and that it suggests to us that the unloving, like those cities full of uncleanness, when they are brought into contact with the infinite love of the coming Judge, shrivel up and are destroyed.

1. The scope of this indictment is obviously restricted to those who know something about the life and work of Jesus and call themselves by His name. The founder of one of the ethical systems of the East once said, 'To punish the people before first instructing them is cruelty';

[1] F. W. Boreham, *The Golden Milestone*, 42.

and to that axiom our common instincts at once agree. Paul would have been the first to apply that principle in the domain of his Gospel. This steadfast, impartial lover of the Gentile world would not for a moment dream of attaching blame to those who were in a condition of ignorance, or to those who might at the moment have defective or unorthodox views of the person and sacrificial work of the Lord Jesus. It is a malady of the heart, rather than of the intellect, that is banned in the stern sentence closing this Corinthian letter. Of the two Greek words used to denote love, Paul here selects the one which describes not so much reasoned and reverential love, but rather the impulse of instinctive friendship, such spontaneous leaning towards Jesus Christ as Simon Peter claimed for himself in the days of his failure.

This simple love of friendship upon which Paul so sternly insists had in it the germ of faith. It is not upon a denial of the cardinal articles of the Creed that this solemn anathema is pronounced. Subtle intellectual distinctions may be introduced into the statement of Christian doctrines which do not carry conviction to all minds alike. Faith in its beginnings is the product of the heart rather than of the brain, and the man who is instinctively drawn to the Lord as to a friend will not miss the mark. It is a part of God's judicial method of discriminating character that the true Christology should have its root in the affections. 'No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost,' and the revelation arises from the shedding abroad of love within the heart. We are led by love to faith. The Jews could not believe Jesus because they hated Him. If we love Jesus with the simple human love of friendship only it makes it easier for us to believe that 'God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name.' The man who loves the Lord Jesus has in himself the pledge of faith, and the man who does not love Him cannot truly believe.

¶ H. G. Wells in his fascinating book, *First and Last Things*, has given us his 'confession of faith and rule of life,' and you will recall how he boldly asserts that Christ 'does not attract and never has attracted' him. He needs, so he says, 'some one quite other than this image of virtue, this terrible and incomprehensible Galilean,' and contrasts with 'the

singular and extraordinary charm' which from his youth he has felt in that wayward genius, Oliver Goldsmith, the absence of any such appeal in Jesus Christ.[1]

¶ There is, in one of the letters of Emily Lawless, a passage which sums up her whole creed—her faith in Christ and in Love and in their power of inspiration:

'It has grown upon me more and more to feel that though belief, in the doctrinal sense of the word, becomes yearly more impossible, more obviously human in *all* its innumerable manifestations, on the other hand Love—a clinging to something outside ourselves and not liable to accidents—becomes yearly *more* possible, and seems to me to be the one supreme truth that will some day emerge clearly above all the fog and the jar and tangle of disputing creeds. I do not know what I should do if I had the sole directing of a young ardent nature in such matters, but I feel that what I should do would be to try and get that capacity for love developed, and then let everything else take its chance.

At the lowest the Being that she had learnt to love would be the noblest and tenderest in all history, and as for miracles, the miracle of His turning the bitter waters sweet, and pulling wrecked lives straight, and that not by ones and twos, but by millions upon millions, is quite miracle enough for me. Of course the *advocatus diaboli* will whisper that one is adoring a myth, but one must just *let* him whisper, and once the root of love is well grounded I do not think such whispers matter. The heart is a far more tenacious organ than the head, and not nearly so much at the mercy of those loud winds of Doubt.'[2]

2. The Apostle assumes that men are put under an obligation to love the Lord, which presupposes their knowledge of the great facts of the gospel. When he addressed the people of Corinth by word and by letter the visible ministry of the Man of Nazareth had been closed for nearly a generation, and yet the demand made for love on His behalf was ever being successfully reasserted. This could come to pass only in virtue of three or four great facts which constitute the essence of the Christian religion: the presence of the Lord in the midst of His followers; the operation of His personal influence upon their spirits; and also the possibility of conscious fellowship with Him, for there can be no complete love without converse. We cannot love a memory or a tradition, however holy, and apart from these truths, which are the staple of apostolic Christianity, Jesus could be nothing more than a sublime tradition and a memory. But the spirit of Jesus was working in the hearts of those Corinthians. He was coming nearer and yet nearer to cleanse, to help, to welcome them into His mystic fellowship, or this claim for love would have been preposterous and unreal. It would be absurd to put one under a curse for failing to love the Pharaoh who built the great Pyramid, because he has done absolutely nothing for us. The broken fragments of his skin and bone that lie in the mummy wrappings of a museum awaken little or no sentiment. Unless Jesus still lives and pardons and acts on our side He is a shadow, and we cannot give our hearts to shadows.

3. Further, love to the Lord Jesus and obedience to the Divine commandment are interchangeable terms. The anathema under the Mosaic dispensation upon disobedience to a moral code is made to rest, under the Christian dispensation, upon the state of mind which prompts to transgression. The Apostle knew only too well that the disasters troubling the Church at Corinth were caused by want of love to the Lord Jesus. This Divine passion is the only force which can prevail against the primeval animalisms of the natural man, and bring release from thraldom. There was party spirit at Corinth of a peculiarly bitter and exclusive type, and such an unhappy condition of things could not have prevailed had Christ's love been dominant in those who professed to be His followers. There was the riot of greed, gluttony, intemperance, coarsening with odious degradations even the Holy Supper itself. The picture could not well have been darker. But had there been adequate love to the Lord Jesus in the breasts of His followers, these dark moral contaminations could not have spread themselves. To many it would have seemed the more reasonable and impressive course to have put these prevalent misdemeanours under a ban, and to have instituted a new proclamation of the curses

[1] F. B. Macnutt.
[2] Edith Sichel, *New and Old*, 172.

once declaimed from Mount Ebal. But Paul, with deeper insight, pronounces one tremendous anathema, which includes the rest—his anathema upon the lack of a spiritual affection, the kindling of which would have saved from every shade and degree of delinquency. His diagnosis is deep and final. And that is true to-day. All defects of personal character may be analysed into this central defect. A bigger love would cure every moral blemish that cleaves to us. We should overleap the bounds of class, caste and time, and should cleanse our social life from the dishonours that stain it, if we kept Christ's precepts, and we could not help keeping them if we loved Him better. Every reproach attaching to the name of our country, every perilous problem with which posterity will have to deal if we ignobly defer the settlement, may be traced to disdain of the golden rule; and the golden rule can never be upheld and applied where love to its first preacher is wanting. Every sin of Christendom implies a lack of love to the Lord Jesus. It is only as we abide in His love that we are able to do the works of the law.

¶ Robert Louis Stevenson is said to have formed his delicate crystalline style by always carrying two books in his pocket, one of which was a Chaucer or a Defoe, a Shelley or a Charles Lamb, and the other a note-book. Whenever he found a passage that excited his special admiration he pulled out the note-book and tried to write something resembling it. Had he not felt the literary instinct within him, and been able to appreciate the intellectual attributes of his masters, there would have been no imitation. The volumes which were his companions would have been left to mildew on an upper shelf, or would have gone the way of the second-hand bookshop. He laughingly speaks of himself as 'the sedulous ape,' but no ape, however well trained, would have treasured an English Classic, and shown such love for its contents. Intelligent sympathy is the mainspring of imitation.[1]

Where there is the love of friendship to Jesus there will be the desire to emulate. And to love the Lord shows some kind of capacity for the high life He lived. You can tell the kind of man into which a youth will develop, and the place he will fill in his generation, if you know the friends with whom he best likes to consort. The attitude of heart we assume towards Jesus Christ will yield an indisputable clue to the potentialities of character. A man has lost the secret of moral and spiritual progress if he feels no drawing of soul to the prophet-hero of Galilee, who lived as none other ever lived, and died to give Himself a ransom for men.

[1] T. G. Selby.

4. The destruction implied in the Apostle's anathema is a death in life. Suppose a man with all his past annihilated, with all its efforts foiled and crushed, with all its possessions gone, and with his memory and his conscience stung into clear-sighted activity, so that he looks back upon his former self and into his present self, and feels that it is all waste and chaos, would not that be something like the meaning of the word 'anathema'? And suppose that such a man had the quivering consciousness that he was in the presence of an unloved Judge; have we not there the naked bones of a dreadful thing, which does not need any eloquence of man to make it more solemn and more real? The unloving heart is always ill at ease in the presence of Him whom it does not love. It does not trust, or see the love; therefore the unloving heart is a heart that is only capable of apprehending the wrathful side of Christ's character. So there is no arbitrariness in the decree that the heart that loves not, when brought into contact with the infinite Lord of Love, must find in the touch death and not life, terror and not hope.

It is because the gospel is a gospel that it speaks plainly about death and destruction to the unloving. Rebuke is the sign of love. Sharp condemnation may be the language of love. Plain warning of possible evils is the simple duty of love. So in the words 'My love be with you all in Christ Jesus,' the Apostle folds all whom he has been rebuking in the warm embrace of his proffered love, which was the very cause of his rebuke. The healing balm of this closing message was to be applied to the wounds which his keen-edged words had made, and to show that they were wounds by a surgeon, not by a foe. In effect, this parting smile of love says, 'I am not become your enemy because I tell you the truth; I show my love to you by the plainness and roughness of my words.' 'Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.'

Marana tha

1 Cor. xvi. 22.—'Maran-atha.'

This strange expression has perplexed the interpreters from early times down to the present. They have been puzzled to determine its connection, its composition, and its significance. They have made many suggestions with reference to it. But to-day it is agreed that, when we read the verse in which the unusual phrase occurs, we should make a full stop after the word 'Anathema.' St Paul pauses when he has inscribed that sorrowful word on his parchments. He lifts his pen. When he puts it down again, it is to commence a fresh sentence. The sentence has two words in it, the words 'Marana tha.' They are not Greek, like those which have just been written. They are Aramaic or Syrian. Perhaps it is that Paul, himself a Hebrew of the Hebrews, loves now and then to recur to his own mother-tongue. Perhaps it is that the expression, as embodying the great desire of Christian hearts, had become a current ejaculation of the early disciples, and was as intelligible in Corinth as in Jerusalem or in Antioch. In any case, here the short sentence stands, to convey its own distinct and momentous truth. It suggests the call of a trumpet ringing out, sudden and rousing, from a castle wall; and then, once more, there is the silence and stillness of the night.

And what does it mean? It is a prayer, rising from expectant and loving spirits, 'Our Lord, come!' The first believers thought much about the Second Advent of Christ. They were always looking for His glorious appearing. 'Soon,' they told themselves and one another, 'the winter will be past, and He, our King and our Friend, who went from us that Sabbath on Olivet, will return to crown us with His blessing.' So, when they knelt to pray, whether it was in secret or in the family or in the little congregation, they lifted eyes and hearts heavenward, and cried, 'Marana tha!' '*Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly*!'

Let us suppose that we made the Pauline watchword the motto of our history; and let us see how it would influence that history for good, and how it would leave its impress deep on our character.

1. *It is the Secret of Calmness.*—Essayists and moralists speak to us of the need of our generation for rest. All things are in a welter and whirl. Our hearts cry out sometimes for a pause in the feverish activity, a period of quiet after the push and rush of events, in order that we may cultivate the old-fashioned virtues of reflection and meditation and patient thought. It is a cry, natural, defensible, entirely right. We cannot do without the 'flashes of silence.' We dare not dispense with the solitude of the Upper Room. And yet, because the strain and stress are so incessant in our modern day, something more is required than the occasional and vivifying withdrawal from the crowd. We must carry peace into the turbulence. We must maintain the restful spirit in the midst of the storm. How, then, shall we gain this tranquillity? How shall we drink of the feeling of quiet again, and, having ourselves been refreshed, lift the cup to our brother's lips, that he may drink too? One way is by looking up morning by morning, and praying, 'Our Lord, come!'

You have seen engravings of the pictures of Jean François Millet. There is 'The Sower,' the young man striding across the field and scattering his seed broadcast. There is 'The Angelus,' the two peasants pausing reverently in their labour, because they have heard the chime of bells from the church spire in the distance. There is 'The Gleaners,' the three women stooping over the earth, which they are searching for the forgotten ears. They are all most homely, most familiar, most simple. Yet the artist, by the magic of his genius, invests these toilers with a kind of sanctity. Their task, rough as it is, ordinary as it is, appears as holy as a sacrament. 'I wish I could make infinity perceptible,' Millet said himself about his work. If, as we pursue the common round and perform the work of every day, we keep reiterating 'Marana tha,' we shall make infinity perceptible to ourselves and to many beside.

2. *It is the Secret of Holiness.*—When we have professed ourselves Christians we are apt to be satisfied and to relax our care. We assume that now all is as it ought to be. But what we fancy ourselves, and what we are in the judgment of others—neither of these will content our Lord. 'He knew what was in

man' when He was among us long ago; and He still penetrates deep below the surface. There is no criticism so delicate and discriminating as His, no analysis so thorough. He puts the qualities and principles of our hearts into His scales. In the old Eddystone Lighthouse—Winstanley's ill-starred lighthouse—the prisms were hung with the most careful exactitude, in order that every one of them might receive and might reflect the entire central flame. It is said that no fewer than forty thousand mathematical calculations were made before this end was finally secured. What Jesus seeks in us is the reflection of His whole righteous and gracious character; inwardly and outwardly we are to shine with His pure light.

Suppose that His advent were to take place now, suppose that we should suddenly find Him standing in the midst as He stood among the disciples on that Sabbath evening when the doors were shut for fear of the Jews, what about our real self? Could we look into His face and assure Him that, above everything else, we had been seeking holiness, holiness of thought as well as of conduct?

¶ About the middle of the seventeenth century, in the time of the Quaker persecution in America, William Leddra wrote on the last day of his life from his prison:

'The sweet influences of the Morning Star, like a flood, distilling into my habitation, have so filled me with the joy of the Lord in the beauty of holiness that my spirit is as if it did not inhabit a tabernacle of clay, but is wholly swallowed up in the beauty of eternity, from whence it had its being. As the flowing of the ocean doth fill every creek and branch and then retires again toward its own being and fullness, leaving a savour behind, so doth the life and power of God flow into our hearts, making us partakers of His Divine nature.'[1]

St John, addressing his 'little children,' counsels them to abide in Christ, that they may not be ashamed before Him at His coming. Among those who will pass into the Kingdom prepared for them there may be some ashamed to meet the Master. His words of acceptance will be mingled with words of regret that their faith should have been so feeble, their love so meagre, their obedience so broken by sin.

¶ Tertullian tells of a Christian pastor in the second century who drove out a demon from the spirit of a young woman, although she was, at the time of her possession, an accepted candidate for admission to the Church. 'How is it,' the pastor asked the demon, 'that you ventured to enter one who belongs to Christ?' 'Because,' the significant answer ran, 'because she strayed into my territory.'

It cannot be that we wish to be put to shame before our King because, when He appears, He discovers us straying into the enemy's territory. Therefore let us cultivate the habit of pleading, 'Marana tha!' It will deepen all our holiness.

3. *It is the Secret of Diligence.*—For a while the Householder went into the far country; but, when He was away, He left His servants behind Him, each with talents entrusted to his care; and no sooner was He returned than He called them into His presence, and asked an account of their stewardship. The day of reckoning may be much nearer than we dream; are we laying out for the Householder's advantage every faculty, every opportunity, every moment? Many things, no doubt, must be left unperfected by such workers as we are; it was only He, God's Servant without fault or flaw, who was able to say, 'It is finished.' But, when the call which ushers us before Him falls on our ears and hearts, what a blessedness to listen to His 'Well done!'

¶ In the library of Harvard University, across the ocean, it was my privilege to see the books left to the New England college by Thomas Carlyle—the books which he had himself used in writing two of those works of his whose glory will never die: *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* and *The History of Frederick the Great.* As you handle them the caller winds of Craigenputtock blow in your face, and again you are up in the attic at Cheyne Row, where the splenetic, dyspeptic, immortal man of genius is tasking himself over Friedrich, and is keeping his brilliant wife on edge all the while. Simply to look at these volumes, rank upon rank, is to get a lesson as to the unremitting labour of this master in literature. There are forty books about Cromwell; there are two hundred and fifty about Frederick, German and French and English; and every one of them has been patiently explored and dissected, and annotated with marginalia in which the reader finds a charming candour and sometimes an uncompromising bite. Here was a man who

[1] Rufus M. Jones, *Quakers in the American Colonies*, 88.

never played with a single duty, and whatever he did was genuine to its core.[1]

The zeal of other toilers may well put us to shame. Ought not the helpers of Jesus Christ to be equally zealous? It would certainly aid us to be so if we lived in the continual expectation of His advent, when He will try our work to see of what sort it is. Then, doing all *sub specie æternitatis*, we should hold in abhorrence the service which is scamped and pretentious and unreal. Then indolence would have no tolerance from us. 'Now let me burn out for God,' the young missionary cried; and the cry would have its echo in our hearts.

¶ Murray M'Cheyne's biographer says that 'if he had lived to complete sixty or seventy years he could not have accomplished more than he did, dying at twenty-nine; and his name and memory would have had less power to influence and subdue and compel. That he packed such saintliness and such service into so brief a span constituted his peculiar appeal to his own generation, and will always invest his example with an allurement and an impulse which are given to very few.' [2]

Expectancy

1 Cor. xvi. 22.—'Maran-atha.'

One deep note of the primitive Church was the note of expectancy. The early believers were full of forward-looking thoughts. Almost the only fragment of a liturgy which the New Testament preserves is the watchword *Marana tha*—'Our Lord, come!' and that word echoed in Christian assemblies and found response in the hearts of the faithful. For they believed not only that Christ had come, and had suffered and conquered and ascended into heaven: they believed also that Christ would speedily come again with great power and glory, to make an end of sin and to deliver His people out of the present evil world. The first disciples laboured and endured and triumphed in the patience of this mighty hope. The most wonderful and blessed of events, the crown and consummation of all things, must happen soon; it might happen at any moment. And so morning by morning they whispered, 'He may be here before sunset'; and evening by evening they made answer, 'He shall surely come, and not tarry.' The New Testament closes with the promise, 'Behold, I come quickly,' ratified by the happy prayer, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus.' [1]

¶ Without knowing it, some nameless scribe gave the last canonical command to the Church of Christ. For what is 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus,' but a form of 'Eyes Front!' to the people of God in every generation! It is all another way of saying that the last instruction is that we shall in every age deal with our problem, or our fear, not by burrowing more deeply into it but by looking out of it, by looking up from it—towards resources and an Ally with Christ in God.[2]

How sweet and dear the syllables 'Marana tha' had become to Christ's folk in Palestine we may judge from the evident familiarity with them on the part of the wider circle of Gentile Christians. This was a foreign expression to them, even as it is to us. They must have caught it up from the first preachers of the gospel who came forth from Syria—men who preached the good news in Greek, but, when greatly moved, gave utterance to their indomitable hope in the accents of the old home. And there must have been something in the triumphant bearing of the speakers as they spoke their watchword which made it sweet in Gentile ears. And so it passed into the language of the universal Church as an expression of that hope which gave buoyancy to every believing heart, which sustained men and women even when the deep waters went over their soul.

1. What a difference there is between the Apostolic Church and the Church of our day. In externals, of course, they are worlds apart. But the interior world of the Apostolic Church was also entirely different from the mood of the Church to-day. There was a spirit of expectancy in that Church which we do not possess. It did not look vaguely forward as we do to an expanse of centuries in which the Spirit of Jesus should slowly penetrate society and build up a kingdom of righteousness through the ages to come. It was alive with expectation of a great day when He who had passed into the heavens and veiled Himself

[1] A. Smellie, *Service and Inspiration*, 121.
[2] A. Smellie, *Robert Murray M'Cheyne*.

[1] T. H. Darlow.
[2] J. A. Hutton, *The Dark Mile*, 294.

from human eyes would come back to earth and achieve the annihilation of death and the final defeat of sin.

There have been times in the history of the Christian Society when that hope has been on a great scale a dynamic force, kindling to saint-hood and service; but our own is not one of them. Those who 'love the appearing,' and reflect how largely that love has passed away from Christian men, will find their feelings expressed in Christina Rossetti's haunting lines:

No grave for Hope in the earth,
But deep in that silent soul
Which rang no bell for its birth
And rings no funeral toll.
Cover its once bright head;
Nor odours nor tears be shed:
It lived once, it is dead.

Many of us are not waiting for the coming Saviour because we only half believe that He ever came. To thousands of our members Jesus Christ is more a personification of ethical ideals than the personal Master of spirits, more a moral Teacher than a Redeeming Lord. Most of us nowadays feel Christ's charm more than His transcendent authority, and strive rather to understand the surroundings of His earthly Ministry, or to analyse the sources of His life, than to apprehend the message of His Cross and Resurrection. Only when we learn to know Christ Incarnate, Risen and Ascended, shall we again experience the power of 'that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.'

2. We do not forget that the hope of an imminent Christ was embodied for the Apostles in the apocalyptic symbols which were common to their day; and, though it is not therefore evacuated of reality, it must be fundamentally reinterpreted. It has been, it is being, fulfilled, in ways unexpected by the first disciples. Nearly two thousand years are witness that Christ has come, and our day itself is a 'day of the Lord.'

Christ has been coming indeed, and the story of His Church is the record of His return. He has come in every crisis when, under pressure of adversity, the Christian community has been thrown back upon the ultimate sources whence she draws her strength—not upon wealth, nor inherited influence, nor the power of her apologetic, nor her numbers, nor her machinery, but upon Him who is her life. Christ came back when Luther forged his brave way through the barricades of mediæval superstition to the heart of the gospel of pardon and acceptance in the justifying grace of God. Christ came back when the Wesleys and those who heard the Evangel through their teaching told anew to eighteenth-century England the story of the Cross. Christ came back in days nearer to our own when men, moved by His own love and pity, struck hard at the slave-trade and the abuses of labour in factories and mines, and called upon the conscience of their country to recognize its duty to the negro, the prisoner, and the child-worker. Christ is coming back into our midst to-day in the sense of brotherhood which recognizes the call, not of a mere political party, but of the Son of Man Himself, to sweep away our social evils. Wherever He invades and touches human life, there He is coming back. These are the signs of His coming Kingdom; these are the prints of His Advent feet.

3. But is this the only coming for which we in our generation are to watch and wait? Has the experience of the centuries forced the believer, who in his creed says 'I believe that He shall come,' to abandon any immediate prospect of what the Bible calls 'the End'?

The definite acceptance of a belief that 'the end of all things' must be pushed forward into remote ages is pregnant with issues for the life and faith of Christendom more serious than any change of outlook or conviction which the Church has ever yet made. Belief in the imminence of the final Advent is the Church's witness to her faith in the exalted Christ. It is her testimony that she believes that not only is He immanent in the experience of the Society which believes on His Name, but that He is also a living transcendent Person, utterly free at any time to enter visibly into the world's life as once He did when 'for us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven.' You will remember the great words in the Pope's prayer in *The Ring and the Book*:

This one earth, out of all the multitude
Of peopled worlds, as stars are now supposed,—
Was chosen, and no sun-star of the swarm,

For stage and scene of Thy transcendent act
Beside which even the creation fades
Into a puny exercise of power.

Is it incredible that He who came down into our world at a definite time and place as the Incarnate Saviour should just as definitely descend into it again in this decade of the twentieth century as the Judge and King of men? It is the blindness of half-belief which tempts us to reply that it is not really probable, and that in such a conviction there are really no spiritual values concerned.

Through many centuries of work and warfare the Church of Jesus has had to learn that 'a day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.' And such an experience may well give her pause from prophecy-mongering. It is utterly impossible for us to embrace imaginative schemes of prophetic interpretation fathered by a literalism which does not recognize the 'many parts and fashions' of the revelation of God. But nothing that we have learned has shaken the certainty of our faith that 'the end' is always 'at hand,' and that Christians dare not settle for themselves that they are to cease to watch for the breaking of what the New Testament calls 'that day.' For us, as for the first disciples, there is ever a Christ who is 'at the doors'; and 'Marana tha' should still have the ringing notes of expectancy and warning which it had for the Church of the first age.

Christ bequeathed to His followers the attitude of childhood which unlocks the door of each new day with eager heart to greet the dawn. The power of faith has ever been the power to believe that the worst may pass at once into the best, the power always and everywhere to anticipate the immediacy of God. Because we have discovered that the universe is a more rigid thing and a larger thing than the Apostles thought it; because we know more of the laws which rule in the slow-revolving cycle of evolution through which the world is passing, there is no reason why we should hold a whit less firmly to the hope derived from our Lord Himself, that there is no time which is not possibly the last time, and no day which may not prove to be the wedding day of the Divine Bridegroom and His Bride.

¶ In 1849 Garibaldi entered Rome. He had come to make the city free, but the times were not ripe. So he withdrew, but before doing so spoke these words to the crowds that gathered around him: 'I will return; I will return. It may not be to-day, it may not be to-morrow; but I will return.' The years passed by and still he did not come. Yet the people in their darkest hours never forgot his promise. At times it seemed that it would be impossible for him to keep that promise. At last, however, on September 20, 1870, he did return, this time to obtain the liberation of Rome, the unification of Italy, and the overthrow of his enemies.[1]

There is nothing that we need more to-day than a recovery of hope for an imminent Christ. In a world which is astir with apprehension, while the deep currents of social agitation are mingling in the channels of its life with tidal movements of intellectual unrest, let us take up the challenge of our modern poet's 'Prayer for Peace'; let us answer his questions with the boldness which is not ashamed of its Advent hope.

Dare we, though our hope deferred,
Left us faithless long ago—
Dare we let our hearts be stirred,
Lift them to the light and know?
Dare we know that wearied eyes,
Dim with dust of every day;
Can once more desire the skies
And the glorious upward way?

Yes, we dare it. And as we win a renewal of that hope, we shall find fire to purge and light to gladden our life.

The Christian Salutation

1 Cor. xvi. 23.—'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.'

In words this salutation is simple and brief; in meaning it is far-reaching and profound. Its significance is suggested by the word 'grace'—a word as comprehensive as any found in the New Testament. This word grace, which is the central word in the salutation, should be placed in juxtaposition to the words faith, hope, and love. For grace expresses the fact of God's

[1] G. B. Taylor, in *The Homiletic Review*.

relation to man, even as faith, hope, and love express the fact of man's relation to God. It tells of the life of God coming down into the life of man that the God-like life may be possible in man.

In selecting the word 'grace' the Apostle remembers that he is writing to a church in Corinth composed of Greeks. And so he takes a word as significant in their language as the word 'peace' in Hebrew, the word 'law' in Latin, the word 'father' in German, or the word 'home' in English. However, he does not content himself with the word as he finds it; he pours into it his own wealth of meaning. Let us look at his conception of 'grace' first as interpreted by Greek usage, and then as enriched by the Christian revelation.

1. *The Greek Use of the Word.*—'Grace' was an attractive word, suggesting at once goodwill, friendliness, a disposition to be in a favourable relation. So attractive was the word that it came to stand for the expression of neighbourly and courteous salutation; one Greek would address another Greek with the words 'Grace be unto you.'

(1) The word suggested a quality in a thing or person which gave joy. This is the primary meaning of the word. Where grace was found there was found that which gave joy. The orator before the assembled throng would be considered a graceful orator if his oration gave joy. A hint of this meaning is found in the New Testament. The Greek physician, Luke, in writing of the first appearance of Jesus in the Synagogue at Nazareth, states that the people wondered at His words of grace. Paul, reared in the Greek city of Tarsus, when writing to the Ephesians, reminds them that as Christians their conversation is to consist of words of grace. This primary meaning has been preserved even to this day. Often it is said of a person who has met a difficult or delicate situation, 'How gracefully he did it'; that is, the thing was done in such a way as to make a good impression or give joy. And this is the meaning of the Apostle in this salutation. He has a message shot through and through with joy.

(2) Further, if grace was the quality in a thing or person which gave joy, the joy thus given had in it a transforming power. The mistake is commonly made of assuming that this word in Greek usage had only an æsthetic meaning. In reality it was a deep word, as the Greek measured depth. His deepest philosophy as well as his highest religious aspiration flowered forth in this word. The supreme philosophic contention of the Greek mind was that the true and the graceful are one. And because the graceful is the true you have in it that which transforms life. The poem faultless in rhythm, the oration pure in diction, and the statue complete in symmetry are graceful, not only because they please the eye or soothe the ear, but because they transform the life. The Greek world staked its moral existence upon the proposition that the graceful and the true are one. And the Apostle, appreciating this mental concept to the Greek mind as related to the moral life, seizes its great word, and declares to the Christians at Corinth that he has a grace to offer that is attractive and joyful, and will transform life.

(3) How did the Greek explain the fact that the joy produced by grace had in it a transforming power? He answered this question by saying that where grace existed there was evidence of the Divine. The Greek never conceived of grace as a thing acquired, or put on and off as a garment. It was something inner and spiritual. The men of that wonderful civilization may have had an indefinite and vague conception, but, nevertheless, grace was for them something Divine. It was made possible by possession of the *daimon*—the good genius working within. The marble was chiselled, the poem written, and in proportion as the one who was chiselling or writing had the Divine within him was his work graceful. It was the Divine that gave his work the quality of joy, and thus the power to transform.

And this was the thought in the mind of the Apostle. Grace was attractive and gave joy, and in the joy given there was the transforming power, because God was in it. As the turbine-wheel is lowered into the rushing torrent to receive its transforming power, that through it a million spindles may whirl, a thousand wheels turn, and myriad lights flash, so a human life in touch with the Divine grace receives the transforming power of God. Paul is here speaking from his own experience. He reveals the secret of his own triumph when he says: 'By the grace of God I am what I am.' And he wants the Church at Corinth to possess this power.

Spring may come, but on granite will grow no green thing;
It was barren in winter, 'tis barren in spring;
And granite man's heart is, till grace intervene,
And, crushing it, clothe the long barren with green.
When the fresh breath of Jesus shall touch the heart's core,
It will live, it will breathe, it will blossom once more.[1]

Everywhere, too, in that wonderful old Greek world, grace was linked to expression and had no meaning apart from it. Grace had a transforming power only when embodied. And this thought is found in the New Testament. The author of the Fourth Gospel, undoubtedly under the influence of Greek philosophy as he writes the prologue to his Gospel, says: 'And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' This is the philosophic contention of the Greek world—the oneness of grace and truth, and this grace and truth embodied in life. And how eagerly the Apostle Paul takes hold upon this final conception of the Greek mind. He says, 'Grace be with you.' But what grace? 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.' A grace that was embodied in an earthly life, whose sweet music was heard by human ears, whose rhythmic movements were watched by human eyes, whose life was as a temple illumined by the Divine.

¶ Here is part of a noble tribute to Jesus Christ which appeared as a leading article in *Al Iraq*, a Baghdad paper, on Christmas Day, 1921: 'Nineteen hundred and twenty-one years ago the ray that leads to the right path appeared in Bethlehem as a bright star, and His light spread over the East and the West. On that day was born the Image of Love and the Great Child. He spent His days calling people to the Truth and guiding them to the right path. He was a good shepherd who sheltered His sheep and defended them against the wolves. He was pure of heart, and His hidden thoughts were clear. All His life He was loved by the poor and the good, and was shunned by the arrogant and the proud. The greatness of Cæsar has passed away, the Nero's page in history is a dark one; but time has failed to efface the greatness of the Apostle of Love, and His page in history remains white, with no spots on it.'

[1] Jalaluddin Rumi.

2. *The Greek Word enriched by the Christian Revelation.*—Let us now see what differences there are in the meaning of the word as used in the Greek world and as used by the Apostle.

(1) First, we have *the difference between the complete and the incomplete.* The Greek conception of grace was imperfect because incomplete. The incompleteness of the Greek conception is seen in its failure to state adequately the moral truth involved in human life as lived in all its relations. The completeness of the apostolic conception is seen in the fullness of the moral teaching which guides human life in its struggle for character as certainly as the compass guides the mariner to his harbour. The Greek conception of grace soothed the ear, pleased the eye, and haunted the mind with its forms, sounds, and colours; the apostolic conception searches the hidden recesses of the soul, disturbs the easy thoughts of the intellect, and awakens the sleeping conscience. The difference is not that between the false and the true, but rather between that which is partly formed and that which is complete. In the old Greek world the suggestions of moral truth are abundantly found. But in the world of the New Testament we find One sent from God to express the very thought of God. He moves with the calm assurance of one who has come out of eternity. He utters His message, not as the Scribes and Pharisees, not as Socrates or Plato, but with authority. He speaks, and, as the discords of that attractive but pagan civilization die away, there comes to us a revelation of truth which makes for ever graceful to the true in heart the seen and the unseen, time and eternity.

(2) Second, there is *the difference between the potent and the impotent.* It is not enough to inquire as to the completeness or incompleteness of a given philosophy of life. We must ask what is its influence in the region of moral living. And here we have a fact which for ever differentiates the Greek conception from the apostolic conception of grace. The Greek was largely impotent in the moral realm. The apostolic has been and continues to be powerful with the very energy of God. Even when we follow the mellowing influence of Greek

civilization through the generations, and generously acknowledge her contribution to the world's progress, we are forced to admit that her ideals have been crowded aside and lost in the galleries of art, where they exist as the dreams of a forgotten people. But when we follow Jesus Christ, listen to His words, observe His deeds, watch His movements as with the tread of a conqueror He goes down into the valley of death and rises triumphant over it, what do we find? He has delivered no oration, carved no statue; but He lived a life—a gracious, deathless, Divine life—a life potent with the energy of God. The Greek conception of grace was beautiful, but as measured by the Christian it was superficial. It skimmed over the surface of life as a seagull skims over the ocean waves. The Christian conception is also joyous, but it is fundamental. It reaches down into the depths of life as an anchor reaches down to grip the bottom of the sea. The old Greek world staked its moral existence upon its conception of grace, and lost. The Christian world won. For 'where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly; that as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ!'

¶ In May 1848 Heine went out of doors for the last time. It was to see once more the Venus of Milo. His words are, 'Only with pain could I drag myself to the Louvre, and I was nearly exhausted when I entered the lofty Hall where the Blessed Goddess of Beauty, our dear Lady of Milo, stands on her Pedestal. At her feet I lay a long time, and I wept so passionately that a stone must have had compassion on me. Therefore the goddess looked down compassionately upon me, yet at the same time inconsolably, as though she would say, "See you not that I have no arms, and that therefore I can give you no help?"'[1]

(3) Third, there is *the difference between the limited and the unlimited.* The Greek world as it lingers in art, literature, and philosophy, is a beautiful world, but it is also a small world. There is not in it the 'everlasting wash of air' that one feels and breathes as one lives in the Christian world. The Greek never saw the human family as a whole, but always as a part, and a very small part. The Apostle began by seeing the world in its parts, but ended by bringing the parts into a larger whole. The Greek saw humanity separated by grace. The Apostle saw humanity saved by grace. He proclaimed throughout the Roman Empire the tremendous truth that freedom comes through the indwelling Spirit, as expressed in the moral sphere. He looked deep into the heart of the race and caught a glimpse of character as the only thing worth while. And then, bending his knees before the throne of God, and mentioning the human family of heaven and earth, he prayed that its members might be strengthened with power by the spirit in the inner man, to the end that, being rooted and grounded in love, they might be able, with all the saints, to apprehend what is the length and breadth, the depth and height of the love of Christ and be filled unto all the fullness of God.

If St Paul borrowed the word grace to express his mighty truth, he also enlarged its meaning, pouring into it the riches of Christian experience. For grace in the Christian sense was all that it was at its best in the Greek sense, and how much more!

[1] *Life of Heine*, ii, ch. 13.

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

INTRODUCTION

The Second Epistle of St Peter makes the somewhat naïve admission that in the Pauline correspondence there are some knotty points which are liable to be misunderstood by the unlearned and the unstable. But the author of that letter has not been the last man to make this discovery, for we have all asked ourselves, Did the average Christian in Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, or Colossæ quite understand the depth and height of Paul's speculative theology? Indeed, they did not. Yet they all understood the man himself, his enthusiasm for Christ, his humanity, love of liberty and zeal for goodness, and that never-dying flame which burned for the redemption of the world.

In Philemon, however, the stream of thought and life runs clear and untroubled, and the very heart of the Apostle is revealed. His other correspondence has been rightly called Epistles, or treatises, but here is a real letter of friend to friend, not dictated to an amanuensis, as the others were, but written in his own hand, and touched with the personality of a courteous gentleman of the early Christian Age. It has been compared to a letter of the Younger Pliny, a junior contemporary of St Paul, on a similar topic of mercy and forgiving love. The comparison is apt, for Pliny's letter is touching beyond all praise, and shows the springs of goodness that ran under the surface of what has been too often called 'that hard pagan world.' But in discussing it Bishop Lightfoot has rightly judged that 'There will be hardly any difference of opinion in awarding the palm to the Christian Apostle.' The Epistle was indeed depreciated in Early Church history, because in an age of dogma it was thought to be wanting in precise theological definition and ecclesiastical discipline; but later times have done it a nobler justice. For its gospel fragrance it was a favourite with Luther, who, while holding by its historicity, took it as an allegory or parable of the Good News. 'To my thinking,' he said, 'we are all God's Onesimi; what Christ did for us with God the Father, thus also doth St Paul for Onesimus with Philemon.' Ewald speaks of its sensibility and warmth of tender friendship blending with the loftier feeling of a commanding spirit, while Renan calls it a true little *chef d'œuvre* or masterpiece of the art of letter-writing, adding that it is an illustration of the precept Paul himself gave to the Colossians, 'Let your talk always have a saving salt of grace about it' (Col. iv. 6). And, to quote once more, Sabatier adds his tribute, 'Only a few familiar lines, but so full of grace, of serious and trustful affection, that this short epistle gleams like a pearl of the most exquisite purity in the rich treasure of the New Testament.' So much in praise of the letter.

Luther, in commenting on Judah's prayer to Joseph for Benjamin (Gen. xliv. 18)—a speech that is alone in the world's literature 'for pathos and beauty and persuasive eloquence'—says he would give anything if he could pray to God as Judah prayed to Joseph.[1] As often as we read Paul's intercession for Onesimus a like desire arises in our hearts that when we have shown ourselves unworthy we may all have on our side an advocate, some friend of God to pray for us as Paul made intercession with Philemon for the erring Onesimus.

I

CONTENTS

The writers of antiquity, as many a precept reminds us, were careful to choose a lofty and commanding theme, which would be worthy of their pen, and in itself worthy to be adorned. Milton, Gibbon and Tennyson likewise sought an exalted subject. But it is the genius of Christianity to put down the mighty from their seats and exalt them of low degree; to care for the lowly, the wretched, and the despised. Now, the subject of this letter was not a hero, but a Phrygian slave, unworthiest among the unworthy, as Phrygian slaves were deemed, whose name Onesimus (profitable) was typical of his class, and stigmatized him as a tool or chattel; and the designation had become so

[1] Cf. J. Strachan, *Hebrew Ideals*, ii. 131.

servile in its application that it was a stock name in the Roman Comedies for the members of the slave class. He was the property of Philemon, a rich citizen of Colossæ who had been converted to Christianity by Paul during his ministry in Ephesus. Onesimus, contradicting his name, had been far from profitable to his master, as Paul confesses, while with cheerful humour he plays on the name of the unworthy man who bore it. There are many references in Roman Plays to slaves who had stolen their owner's property. *Fur*, a thief, was part of the badinage which slaves used to fling at one another as they jostled each other on the pavement. Onesimus belonged to that class; he had stolen his master's money, and, fleeing to Rome, hoped to hide himself from justice in the dismal purlieus of the city. (Cæsarea as his place of refuge has now few advocates.) Fleeing from God, he had run into the very arms of God; for, we know not how or where, under Paul's preaching he was apprehended by the gospel, and became the slave of Christ and a *help* indeed to Paul, who calls him 'that faithful and beloved brother Onesimus, who is one of yourselves' (Col. iv. 9).

But the Apostle felt that Onesimus still owed a debt to Philemon, for Christianity exalts all natural loyalties, and does not run across or contradict the primal duties. The slave had stolen money, and, strange though it may seem to us, he had stolen himself, for in the eyes of Roman law Onesimus was the property of Philemon. Therefore, one day Paul said to him, You must go back for confession and restitution—back to your master. Onesimus had never anticipated this, thinking that Paul and Christianity had broken all earthly bonds and that he was free. The Apostle's decision for Onesimus was, Return, even though the punishment of a fugitive and thievish slave might involve crucifixion, as frequently it did. But Paul said, Nevertheless you must go back and I shall write a letter which Tychicus and you will carry to Colossæ. Such was the origin and destination of the Epistle to Philemon.

II

CHARACTERISTICS AND APPLICATIONS

It is, as we study it, a letter skilfully adapted to its purpose, brimming with courtesy, with playful humour and the Christian temper. And, apart from its first intention, it inevitably raises certain vital questions not only for that day, but for any day. To discover Philemon is to find a mine of topic and illustration that would furnish a valuable course of lectures on the marrow of the gospel in its practical application. Sabatier, from whom we have already quoted, hails Philemon as 'an invaluable document of the Pauline ethics.'

We are not told what was the result of the letter; but we should be dull indeed if our own hearts could not tell us. Imagination bodies forth the scene when the letter was read in the House-Church of Colossæ, and Onesimus was received, reconciled and accepted as something more than a penitent slave—a beloved brother, dear to Paul, but how much more to Philemon, as a man, a friend and a Christian. Reconciliation, Divine and human, is the theme. Such was the social revolution produced by Christianity. Though the letter may not utter the word manumission or freedom, it is trembling on the lips of the writer, and is present in spirit if not in body, becoming almost articulate in the hope 'I know you will do even more than I tell you.' Such a scene is like the wings of the morning to tell us that soon it will be daylight everywhere. It was things like these that made emancipation a moral necessity and a Christian certainty. And Luther, who knew the gospel wherever he saw it, in the Old Testament or the New, had the genius—shall we say the *flair*—for the evangel to say 'To my thinking we are all God's Onesimi.' Philemon's house was filled that day with the purest joy the heart of man can taste, the joy of finding 'that which was lost'; a slave had been lost, but a friend and brother had been recovered. Such are the transformations in character when the gospel begins to work in the varied relations of life.

THE CHURCH IN THE HOUSE

Philem. i. 2.—'Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, . . . to the church in thy house.'

Apart from its special purpose, the Epistle to Philemon has the further interest of a valuable document in the history of the worship and organization of the Early Church. For the letter is addressed not only to individuals—Philemon, Apphia his wife, and Archippus (with a reasonable degree of probability) his son—but 'to the church that meets in your house.'

I
HISTORY

This reference to what is called 'House-Churches' is not infrequent in the Pauline literature. In Romans the Apostle sends greetings to three, perhaps to five, groups or circles of believers gathered round prominent Christians whom he names: Prisca and Aquila; Phlegon with Hermas and the brethren that are with them; Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the saints that are with them; the household (*familia*) of Aristobulus and the household of Narcissus. And the role of honour is closed with the name of one who has become a synonym for hospitality: 'Gaius mine host, and the host of the Church at large, saluteth you' (Rom. xvi.). In Colossians we find greetings 'to Nympha and the church which meets at her house,' and in 1 Corinthians the household of Stephanas secures honourable mention as a family 'who have laid themselves out to serve the saints' (xvi. 15). Some of these names may have been those of freedmen or slaves belonging to the respective households, but the others are certainly the representatives of House-Churches. In Acts the believers gather in the house of Mary the mother of Mark, with this significant addition, that the Lord's Supper was dispensed in the homes of the Christians 'who broke bread from house to house' (ii. 46)—a clear reference to the Eucharist.

All this opens up an interesting sidelight on the worship and organization of Christians in Apostolic and sub-Apostolic times. For long they met in private houses; indeed there is no evidence of any formal meeting-place till we come to the third century, when special buildings, or churches in our sense, come to be noted (A.D. 202-210). But for more than 200 years the church was in the house. Two causes contributed to this feature of early Christianity.

1. *Necessity.*—In those days obscurity was security. Whereas special ecclesiastical buildings planted in prominence would have invited the ever-jealous eye of the public authorities there was comparative safety if only the Christians abstained from forcing upon officials the character of their societies. One of the forms of association which even the Roman government regarded in a tolerant way was benefit societies, such, for instance, as burial-clubs. House-Churches did not in any overt way provoke the authorities, and they had this in their favour that they were often under the protection of some influential name who might safely gather his friends under the shelter of his roof.

And soon in all the larger towns of the Empire there were these groups or little circles of people gathering round the Name of Jesus for strengthening fellowship, union, and worship. At first the model was the synagogue, or the 'Gilds' which had become a well-known feature in the life of the villages and towns of Asia Minor. The meetings were at all hours, but preferably in the early morning or late at night, when alone slaves and servants were free. This is made clear by the references in Pliny's letter to the Emperor Trajan.

But our point is that, as a result of the preaching of the gospel, the converts formed themselves into groups or circles of piety, and these little communities or 'fraternals' represented men and women who thought alike on all the great questions of the common life. Their influence on the propagation of the gospel was incalculable, and it has always been so. The very beginnings of Christianity owed much to these groups of the faithful and the inquiring. Those who are described as 'waiting for the consolation of Israel' formed an inner circle in Galilee and even in Jerusalem, which furnished a prepared seed-plot for the message of Jesus. Out of such circles there came the father and mother of the Baptist,

Joseph and Mary of Nazareth, Anna and Simeon, and the majority of the disciples, people of the open eye and receptive heart who nourished good thoughts in bad times, and were ready to welcome Christ when He came. There must have been such a circle, or more than one, in Jerusalem, represented by Mary the mother of Mark, whose house (perhaps the Upper Room) was the first House-Church; and the noble women who were last at the Cross and first at the Sepulchre were its representatives. Behind the multitudes, fickle and impressionable, there were these 'praying societies,' the nucleus and nerve centres of the beginning of Christianity. And it should not be forgotten that it is to these circles or religious groups that the promise is given, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them' (Matt. xviii. 20). The promise is to a group, or fellowship, who think alike and are in mystical fellowship with one another and with Him. That these 'circles' continued may be gathered from the saying in the Oxyrhyncus Fragments, which represent the common faith of early Christianity: 'Where one is, there I also am, and where two are, there will I also be.'

2. *The Desire for Union in Fellowship and in Prayer.*—The Church-in-the-House sprang not only from the necessities of the time but from the eager desire of believers to be together. Thus, such meetings grew up spontaneously everywhere as the result of gospel preaching and from an inward necessity. In Rome, in Corinth, in Ephesus and other centres of Evangelism humble men and women gathered together round the Name, in the house of some well-to-do believer who could open his door and audience-hall to his brethren. So we picture the beginning of the Church—homely meetings in some obscure street. At dawn or sunset they gathered, not depressed by their surroundings but rejoicing because they foresaw the day when all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues would gather round their Lord. To such small beginnings churches of to-day, the cathedral and the humble meeting-house alike, look back, saying they have been the mother of us all.

Principal Lindsay has an interesting illustration of a House-Church which, surviving to this day, reproduces, even in its liturgical details, the House-Church of the New Testament. In 1888, he says, he had the privilege of worshipping in a House-Church in the Lebanons. 'The long low vaulted kitchen had been swept and garnished for the occasion, though some of the pots still stood in a corner. The congregation sat on the floor, the men together in rows on the right, and the women in rows on the left. During the services which preceded the Holy Communion, babies crawled about the floor, making excursions from mother to father and back again. When the non-communicants had left (as was the custom in the Early Church) and the "elements" were being uncovered, the mothers secured the straggling babies and kept them on their laps during the whole of the Communion Service, as is prescribed in the Liturgy of St Clement, "Mothers, take up your children."'[1]

In this illustration we have in all essentials a life-like picture of a House-Church in Corinth or Colossæ. It was to such a meeting that the Epistle to Philemon was addressed. Onesimus is there and his master, meeting together in a fellowship where there is neither bond nor free. The reconciling word is spoken, emancipation is in the air, and the Holy Supper is kept indeed.

> From every spot below the skies
> The incense of the heart may rise
> To Heaven, and find acceptance there.

It is not possible, even if it were desirable, to revive in its local and temporal form the House-Church of the New Testament. Our Lord said 'Neither in Jerusalem nor in this mountain'—place and form are nothing, but spirit is everything. It is the spirit that profiteth, and the flesh availeth nothing. But in days when multitudes have fallen away from the formal, elaborate, and organized worship of the Church, it may not be in vain to dwell on the advantages of the House-Church in all that it stood for. It teaches us this at least, that in Apostolic and sub-Apostolic Christianity there was almost unlimited freedom in worship. Routine and form had no place; custom, even religious custom, was not sacrosanct. How strange to these early pioneers would seem all our contentions about uniformity in worship. Instead, they stood for variety and freedom, fellowship, for family-feeling and brotherhood, for unity and authority for the sake of the children, for the consecration of the home.

[1] *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries*, 43.

A German theologian bewails the fact that the idea of the congregation, which he values so highly, has not been developed in Germany as it should, a defect which has left the Lutheran Church weak in many a vital thing. In harmony with his criticism the present writer recalls a remark made to him by one of the most eloquent and popular ministers of the Scots Church, that while he preached weekly to crowded assemblies he had merely an audience and not a congregation. This, which is essentially the complaint of Herrmann, he regarded as a serious handicap to his ministry. The criticism may be repeated in Longfellow's words—

I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where.

Dr F. J. A. Hort [1] calls the House-Church the *domestic* Ecclesia, which is a fruitful and suggestive title for the spirit of the organization we speak of; something home-like, in which believers are bound together in a bundle of life that cannot, and ought not to be broken—a home of souls. In harmony with this description of a primitive church by a great master of the subject, one feels that of all the conventional notes of the Church nothing touches the heart with more persuasion than the counterpart picture in the Acts of the Apostles: 'The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul'; or Paul's word to some Christian group in Corinth: 'Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.' That ideal has found noble expression in the hymn of brotherly love—

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love,
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares.

We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.

[1] *The Christian Ecclesia.*

III

MODERN IMPLICATIONS

Happily in some churches this fellowship in life is the rule, but, alas! in many others it is the exception; and the lack of it is a disabling defect which is responsible in large measure for the loose hold the Church has on the world and even on its own members. In recent criticism of the Church nothing is more persistent than the absence of fellowship. We quote one of these criticisms from a recent Church report: 'The note of the Apostolic Church was joy, natural gladness, no less than spiritual exaltation manifested in common human relations, in eating and drinking and in familiar human intercourse: the sin of the modern Church has been coldness, isolation, the lack of strong bonds of human feeling and interest.' We have to recapture the spirit of the House-Church; the *spirit* and not the form; not the pattern of it, but the example. For it is a futile and often a ridiculous endeavour to go to Apostolic history and copy its details, and find in them what has been called a set of authoritative precepts to be vigorously followed without regard to time and place; this can only mean turning the gospel into a second Levitical Code. To quote Hort again, 'The Apostolic Age is full of embodiments of purposes and principles of the most instructive kind; but the responsibility of choosing the means was left for ever to the Ecclesia itself, and to each Ecclesia, guided by ancient precedent on the one hand, and adaptation to present needs on the other.' The New Testament is not a Directory of Church Government or Order, but the expression of the gathered experience of believers who, led by the Spirit, worked out into life the form that was best adapted to the needs of their time.

And this is how we ought to approach the conception and the use of what is called the Church-in-the-House. We have seen that it had the necessity for security as one of the reasons of its existence, but it had also that of practical wisdom; to find for its worship some inner city of the soul, a warm, homely, sheltered place, where, as in Isaiah's vision of the New Society, 'A man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers (irrigating streams) of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land' (Isaiah xxxii. 2). Here Sir George Adam

Smith, on the ground of personal influence, aptly quotes from the biography of Clerk Maxwell, 'He made faith in goodness easy to other men.'

In this function of the House-Church we touch the first of Gibbon's famous causes for the progress of Christianity, 'The zeal and social spirit of the Early Church,' which was a close compacted fellowship, and economic union of friends and helpers; the brotherhood of a group, the members of which were bound each to each by the strong and sacred ties of a common Faith. It was into this group system that Christianity brought its convert. Outside, unless he had resources or powerful friends, he remained an unsheltered and helpless unit. Within, in the House-Church, he became the brother for whom Christ died, a fellow heir with the saints and of the household of God. The working classes found even their social salvation within the brotherhood—in their group, as Onesimus found his in the House-Church of Philemon.

Thus, from various points of view, in relation to its own time and ours, we have described the Church-in-the-House and have found in it a pulsing centre of worship, fellowship, and service. Bible reading also, as Harnack reminds us, was another of its functions and a notable factor in religious progress; while from the House-Church there radiated a stream of benevolent ministries to the needy, the prisoner, and the widow. So richly did its good works overflow.

It is not, therefore, without a noble jealousy that we look on the picture of primitive Christianity planting itself in the homes of the people. This organization, moreover, while introducing simplicity of worship and making religion accessible, was a welcome innovation on pagan practice. The older religions consisted mainly of pompous ceremonies administered by a priestly order, and requiring priests, and temples, and a set occasion for the elaboration of ceremonies. But the Christian Church was enshrined in the home, the workshop, along the marts of trade; wherever there is a heart open, and a door of access, there is the altar of our faith.

> Jesus, where'er thy people meet
> There they behold thy mercy seat,
> Where'er they seek Thee Thou art found
> And every place is hallowed ground.

And, as Gibbon acknowledges, from this flowed many of the influences that were powerful in winning the Empire for Christ. The home itself became an altar-hearth, where preachers, in bringing the gospel message, were always careful to add, 'Thou shalt be saved *and thy house*.' Christianity therefore need not be ashamed or afraid to rest its case on this social gospel which blesses the homes of the people.

> Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
> And fragrance in thy footing treads.

But changes of organization and worship have come with other times and other days; we need not bewail them nor doubt that God fulfils Himself in them also. It is futile to galvanize defunct customs into a spurious life, or transplant forms of worship from one set of circumstances in the world's providential order into new and entirely different conditions. But the spirit and the ideal nevertheless remain, and it is in these that we shall find the permanent values of apostolic practice in the matter of the House-Church. Perhaps in the rural districts, with their scattered population, unrealized possibilities lie open in this direction of which highly organized religion has not made adequate use. Where the people cannot or are unwilling to come to the Church, the Church may be brought to the people. Indeed this free, unconventional form of worship has never died out wherever religion preserves its vitality. One has vivid memories of 'meetings' as they were called, and of a Sabbath School which made a humble place radiant as the gates of heaven; blessing the entire neighbourhood and heightening the moral and even the intellectual life of a whole community. Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, who knew this thing better than most, may be quoted for his testimony: 'Many, we are sure, count as among the highest and most luminous hours of life the little prayer-meetings they have attended in humble places in kitchens and barns. It all comes before them so vividly that they are tempted to think that no experiences have been graven so deep as these. They recall the walk to the meeting-place, the hopeful loneliness and the sense that they were on the road to Christ, to a full manifestation of His presence. Thus we come to the low doorway through which love, and grief, and patience, and hope approach Him, and enter the little room where we mark His blest abode, and into glory peep.

The little company of grave, subdued worshippers gradually take their places, and one is aware of the deep, still current of thought flowing towards the present Christ, the growing sense of His mastery over us.' These words, which describe a House-Church in the nineteenth century, might well be used of any similar meeting in Corinth, Ephesus, or Colossæ. To them the promise is given, where two or three are gathered together—to the group.

And out of such meetings there have sprung social service, the feeling for missions, and a lifelong devotion to the Church. People respond to the simplicity of the worship, for elaboration in such conditions, as a general rule, is like the over-preparation of Martha which called out the Master's reminder of the better part Mary had chosen. And then one has always as an ally the house where the worship is held; one thinks of Stephanas, Gaius, or Philemon casting a beneficent shadow over the place. This group-system or circle of the pious has possibilities that have yet to be inquired into; and all the more, when we see that other agencies, political and social, have not hesitated to use the circle or 'cell' for an intensive propaganda, similar, we imagine, in methods and results to that practised by the primitive Church. It has been said that it is quite impossible to over-estimate the influence over a parish of a small circle of eager people who are all thinking alike on the great questions of human welfare. This is the work that a church intrenched in the home can do; here is the picture of it—'Child of those childless, father of their orphans, brother of them all; entering into all their household joys and griefs in the most homely and familiar way; interested in the father's work and wages, in the children's education, in the son's going to sea.'

And we should not fear lest the feeling for worship may suffer. For devotional culture depends on other things than form. 'Paul,' as one says, 'seems to have thought as little about the special "construction of sheep-folds" as his Master. What concerned him was that the sheep should be gathered into one flock (not fold) around the One Shepherd.' Among his converts there was anything but a monotonous uniformity either of organization or of worship; there was freedom, and the liberty of the Spirit. And yet the religious impression was made so deep that the Apostle could testify of the House-Church in Corinth: 'If some unbeliever or outsider comes in, he is convicted by all, and is sifted by all; the secrets of his heart are brought to light, and falling on his face he will worship God, declaring God is really among you' (1 Cor. xiv. 24-25). So the mysteries of God were revealed to the groups of two or three, and from these there sprang a power both social and spiritual far surpassing all rival organizations and religions.

We conclude with the picture or symbol Ruskin takes to declare the manifold variety of the Church's work and life. The old tower of Calais, overlooking the Channel, was in his day partly fortress, partly lighthouse, and partly chapel. And in this he saw an emblem of what the Church might stand for—a fortress as the defence and rallying-centre of the Faith; a lamp of life to guide men buffeted and tossed by the storms of temptation, and a healing sanctuary, some inner city of the mind where men are touched and made whole by the vision of the Unseen; that for protection, this as a star shining across life's troubled sea, and that for patience and prayer. So may the Church-in-the-House of ancient and of modern times shine in its own light, as Onesimus found it in the house of Philemon—brotherhood, reconciliation, and service—in the shelter of a group or brotherhood of believers.

Christ's Faith makes but one Body of all souls. W. M. Grant.

The Christian Spirit in Action

Philem. 10.—'I beseech thee for my son Onesimus.'

This short letter of Paul to Philemon lies hidden away in a quiet corner of the New Testament. It is almost obscured from sight among the longer letters, but the New Testament would have been as poor without it as the woods without violets. It tells in its own artless way and in the story which lies behind it how Christ comes into a man's life, not merely to answer his problems and settle his doubts—all that is important; but it also tells this, which is just as important, how Christianity sweetens the relations between man and man, how Christ steps in to dissolve the bitterness, to soften the misunderstandings, to put us right with one another in the little things in which we often go wrong, and finally to set our varied relationships

on such a footing that our little circle of friends or associates shall become part of that blessed society of souls which is the Kingdom of God.

1. Onesimus had run away from Philemon, his master, taking with him various things of value. Driven no doubt by a guilty conscience, and the better to hide himself, he made for Rome, which was like many great modern cities—the sink into which the worst characters in the land gather, in order to be lost in the stream. Then a strange thing happened. In the very place where he had fled to hide himself Onesimus was discovered, not by Philemon or the trackers of runaway slaves, but by a greater pursuer. The Divine love followed Onesimus. Conscience pursued him. The Spirit of God sought him out. How it happened we do not know. Perhaps his past suddenly flashed upon him in a face from the crowd, as in the case of Tito in George Eliot's *Romola*. Tito had run away from his duty, which was to free his benefactor from slavery, and was climbing up the ladder of fashion and position by means of the money which had been entrusted to him for this sacred duty. He plunged into the stream of life at Florence imagining he was safe from pursuit except in the haunting voice of conscience, which in time he hoped to stifle. But just when he was getting along famously and all was merry as a marriage bell, he caught a glimpse of a face in the crowd one day and eyes looked into his for a moment that seemed to scorch his very soul. It was his benefactor, escaped and mad for revenge, burning with a remorseless scorn and hatred. There is no place in all this world big enough to hide a man from the pursuit of conscience and the harrying of guilt. For whether it come in vengeance or in shame or in sorrow, the thing that haunts and tracks us down is the love of God seeking to win us, to find us, to hold us with the passion which never lets men go.

We do not know what it was that brought Onesimus under the influence of Paul in his prison. Perhaps a chance meeting with one who had been with Paul in Colossæ and was with him now in Rome, and whose very face, as Onesimus met him on the street, let loose a flood of recollection and broke him down, till he allowed himself to be led to Paul and there found Christ.

Onesimus was not very long a Christian before he found himself faced with a strait gate and a narrow way. That is a common experience, and Christ led us to expect it—the strait gate and the narrow way, and over them the shadow of the Cross. For Christ creates just as many difficulties as He removes; He sets just as many problems as He solves. But the difficulties Christ brings by His demands upon us are not the sordid, miserable difficulties that we make for ourselves in the entanglements of selfishness; they are clean difficulties—the steps of the ascent by which we climb to God and by which God makes it possible for us to climb. For every difficulty conquered is a step *upward*; every strain is an offer of strength. So Onesimus had to face his difficulty, his narrow way. He had to go back to Philemon and ask forgiveness for the theft, and put himself into his hands, risking the hardship he might have to suffer and facing the sneers and the shame of the little community. He had to learn, to put it in another way, that the forgiveness of God does not mean the cancelling of consequences. The forgiveness of God does not cover any wrong. We must stand up to the situation into which sin has brought us, facing it with the help of God. Where it is possible for us to make amends it is our business to do it.

¶ Coleridge tells of a young Italian artist who had assassinated his patron at Rome and fled from justice. He escaped to Germany, where he prospered in his profession. Beyond the Italian jurisdiction he was secure from punishment; yet he had no peace. His guilt lay heavy on his soul; he was haunted by the memory of his crime; and at length he could endure it no longer, and returned to Rome and surrendered himself to justice. Open confession and reparation to the utmost—that is the sinner's only way of peace, the only satisfaction of the soul's moral instincts.[1]

¶ 'Thou didst send for me,' said Savonarola to Lorenzo the Magnificent, the tyrant of Florence, as he lay on his dying bed. 'Yes,' said Lorenzo, 'for three sins lie heavy on my soul,' and then he told the monk how he was tortured by the remembrance of the sack of Volterra, and his robbery of a bank whereby many poor girls had lost their all and been driven to a life of shame, and the bloody reprisals he took after a political conspiracy against him. 'God is good,' replied Savonarola,

[1] David Smith.

'God is merciful. But,' he at once added, 'three things are needful.' 'What things?' asked Lorenzo anxiously. 'First, a great and living faith in God's mercy.' 'I have the fullest faith in it,' replied the dying man. 'Secondly, you must restore all your ill-gotten wealth.' At this Lorenzo writhed, but at last he gave a nod of assent. 'Lastly,' said Savonarola to the cowering prince, 'you must restore to Florence her liberty.' And Lorenzo angrily turned his back upon the preacher and said never a word.[1]

But Philemon, too, had to face his strait gate and his narrow way. For Christ was going to demand this of him in the name of his faith, that he should forgo all the penalties which a master exacted of a runaway slave and put him back in his old place and forgive the debt. He was not only to deny the human passion for revenge, for what men often call, or miscall, justice. The whole social order would be up against him. They would tell him it was a direct encouragement to rebellion among the slaves. They would call him sentimental and foolish. And further, there would be the humbling to his own pride. For notice what Paul is asking of him in the name of Christ. He is asking of him this terribly hard thing—not only to wipe off the past and let the debt go, but to receive this man not as a slave, not even as a reformed slave, but as a brother beloved, a kinsman in Christ, a man with an equal place and right in the love of God. That is unspeakably difficult; it looks like folly. But it had to be done. It was the Christian way, and one of the Bible names for a Christian is 'a fool for Christ's sake.'

¶ In answering the questions put to passengers as they approach America, I have always been conscious of the cruelty of one of them. I suppose, on the narrow view of things, it must be necessary; no great nation, I assume, would persist in a cruel question unless there was some reason and justification. 'Were you ever in prison?' you are asked. It is not a Christian question. For if one has been in prison, it means that one has borne the retribution appointed by the Society whose security he had assailed, and besides, America, like every really great people of the earth, was founded in the first instance by exiles, by prisoners released, or by those who fled from prison!

[1] J. D. Jones, *The Unfettered Word*, 106.

It is for this reason that I thought a recent fiction of Mr Locke the novelist a real bit of playful Christianity—I mean *Septimus*—for in that story he tells us of one whom he makes his hero, who, having come upon a burglar in the very act of rummaging amongst his belongings, there and then invited him to become his valet; and an excellent valet he became.[1]

Some one has remarked that a man never realizes what it is to be really Christian till he has stood before one whom he has wronged and asked forgiveness for his sin. That is the humbling which, in the eyes of Christ, is exaltation. But we may say that a man never realizes what it means to be really Christian, really forgiven, till he has stood before one who has greatly wronged him and held out his hand. For at that moment he knows a pain in hands and head and heart such as came upon One who hung upon a Cross. It is a simple lesson, the duty of forgiveness, the forgiveness that is willing to look upon the man who has wronged you, if he repent, as your redeemed brother, your kinsman in Christ, and to trust him again even at the risk of his deceiving you; yet it is the only way to a high understanding and an abundant entrance into the forgiving love of Christ.

¶ In the 'forties of last century, when the New Testament had become 'The Great Treasure' of the fierce yet chivalrous natives of New Zealand, a Maori was seen to withdraw suddenly from the semicircle before the Communion table and go back the whole length of the church to his seat; and then, in a little while, to return and partake of the Sacrament. When he was asked to explain his curious conduct, 'When I approached the table,' he replied, 'I did not know whom I should have to kneel beside. Then I suddenly saw that I was next to a man who some years ago slew my father and drank his blood. And that man I had then sworn I would kill the first time I saw him. So I went back to my seat. And as I sat there I saw in the spirit the sanctuary on high, and I seemed to hear a voice saying, "Thereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." That made a deep impression on me; and at the same time I thought I saw another sight, a Cross and a Man nailed upon it; and I heard *Him* say, "Father, forgive them, for they know not

[1] J. A. Hutton, *Our Only Safeguard*, 272.

what they do." Then I went back to the altar.' [1]

2. We can be certain that Philemon did take Onesimus back. And the letter gives us a glimpse of a curious situation which was very common in these early days of Christianity. It suggests a master and a slave bound to each other by the most cruel and unchristian of ties which men ever forged for their fellows—the chain of slavery—and yet regarding each other not as master and slave only, but as brothers in Christ, a deeper thing than even blood brotherhood, the deepest and divinest thing in heaven and earth. That curious situation tells us one or two things about Christianity which we may put in a word.

(1) For one thing, it tells us that Christianity enriches the relationships of life. When Onesimus went away, Philemon had lost an indifferent slave, whom, in fact, he was better without. When he came back after having passed into the hands of Christ, he was a slave to whom duty was music, whose work was lit with love. A servant may have a bad master, but Christianity never gives him an excuse for being a bad servant. A man may have a bad servant, but no slackness or any other thing will excuse him for being a bad master. The conditions of life may not be good, and the relations in which we stand to one another may not be ideal, but Christianity, when it is real, will make them as good as they *can* be. When Christ comes in, the whole outlook of life and work and service is lifted above the narrow horizons of our own pleasure, or even of the accepted standards, and becomes centred on Christ. A Christian man ought to be the best master, the best servant, the best friend, the best lover—just because he belongs to Christ.

(2) There is a second thing. Christianity overleaps the mechanical and often artificial relationships of life. Here were Philemon and Onesimus, master and slave, and yet deep in their hearts all that was forgotten. It was not the *main* thing. They became brothers, sons of God, equal in God, with the brand of the slave and the dignity of the master alike overcome by the lustre which came to them both from the shadow of the splendour of the Cross. That is the next highest thing Christ does with our social differences. He brings in a love, a sympathy, a respect, a kinship, which transcends them altogether.

(3) And there is a third thing. It is not in the story but it sprang out of a situation like this. When Christ comes into any human relationships, He not only makes them the very best of their kind, and gives us grace to disregard all barriers which would keep us from being our best to each other: He does more. If the relationships are wrong, He changes them, breaks them down at last, as a stream which is rushing full and strong, breaks down the narrow banks and makes new channels of its own. This is what happened with slavery. It was Christianity that broke down slavery, swept it out. How was slavery abolished in America? It was through one man of genius carrying into his political life the logic of this principle of brotherhood, and risking everything upon it.

¶ In Drinkwater's play [1] an old negro preacher, Frederick Douglas, visits Abraham Lincoln and is invited to take a chair. The negro is reluctant to sit down, and says: 'I am black and you are white.' 'No, no,' replies Lincoln, 'we are just two old men talking together.'

When a master and slave became Christian they became brothers; they saw each other in Christ against the background of the Cross. That kind of relationship went on for a while, but after a bit they began to see that it could not last. The relation of master and slave was too narrow and gross and cruel a thing to hold the river of this Christian love. It became intolerable to look at a man in the light of Christ and love him in Christ and at the same moment put chains on him and make him a slave. The thing could not stand, and it broke—Christianity broke it by creating and inspiring the right spirit, the Christian spirit, and the Christian outlook, in master and slave alike.

¶ Close and intimate were the personal and political relations between settlers and natives in Pennsylvania. Provision was made for equitable settlement of all disputes between white men and red, they were guests of one another in wigwam and home, and under Penn's rule no Indians were made drunk that they might sign away valuable claims, no false maps were shown them, no false weights deceived them in their trading intercourse. In all their transactions they met with the same justice which

[1] W. Canton, *Yesterday, To-day and For Ever*, 55.

[1] *Abraham Lincoln.*

the white man demanded for himself, the treatment accorded them being the necessary outcome of the Quaker's conviction that to them, as to him, there was given a measure of the Light of God.[1]

There are many things in our relations to-day between man and man and class and class which are wrong and unchristian. Even as they are, Christianity can sweeten them. But the way to put them right is not to break them down from without, by any hammer stroke of revolution. The way out of it all is to bring in the new spirit. There is no social utopia of our dreams which can come in any other way. It is the living breath of Christian goodwill we need to-day. Nothing else will heal the division between class and class, between man and man, between nation and nation. The lack of it has been the ruin of every effort that men have made to create heaven upon earth. Let in the new spirit and it will make the new channels.

Epaphras

Philem. 23.—'Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus, saluteth thee' (R.V.).

Col. i. 7, 8.—'Even as ye learned of Epaphras our beloved fellow-servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit' (R.V.).

Col. iv. 12, 13.—'Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, saluteth you, always striving for you in his prayers, that ye may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. For I bear him witness, that he hath much labour for you, and for them in Laodicea, and for them in Hierapolis' (R.V.).

Much less is known of Epaphras than of his namesake Epaphroditus. The letter to the Philippian Church hangs upon a series of events connected with Epaphroditus. The letter to the Colossian Church doubtless took shape from the news which Epaphras brought to Rome, but there is an absence of familiar personal incident and of that rich local colouring which invest the story of Epaphroditus with a special charm. Yet, though our material is less, we can, by means of the passages quoted above, piece together a picture of Epaphras which is full of interest and instruction.

1. Epaphras was a native of Colossæ. He was doubtless a Gentile, for in Col. iv. 11, 12, St Paul distinguished him from his Jewish 'fellow-workers.' He was, moreover, a Christian convert—'a bondservant of the Lord Jesus Christ'—words that imply an active worker for His cause. He is, accordingly, called 'a beloved fellow-servant' of the Apostle. There is every reason to believe that Epaphras had been the 'native evangelist' of his own countrymen; and, further, that he had evangelized Colossæ as the representative of St Paul.

Nor can we doubt that the neighbouring towns of Laodicea and Hierapolis had heard the gospel from the same messenger. This is at least highly probable, from the express witness borne to Epaphras as 'having much labour' for the converts, not only at Colossæ, but also in these closely related cities. It is an attractive picture and one which is being happily reproduced again and again in the modern missionary field. To take but one instance: we think of the little Egba slave-boy Adjai, carried away from his home in Yoruba, rescued by the English warship, the *Myrmidon*, taught the love of Christ in a school at Bathurst, educated in England, and returning to be, first the native evangelist of his own people, afterwards the native Bishop of the Niger. Bishop Samuel Crowther was the Epaphras of the Yoruba Mission.

What brought Epaphras to Rome is not so clearly told us as in the case of Epaphroditus. He may have come on some private business, or he may have come for the special purpose of laying before the Apostle the state of the Colossian Church and of seeking his counsel. Two things seem to be clear. (1) That he gave on the whole a cheering account of the Colossian Christians. He was able to speak of their 'faith in Christ Jesus,' of 'the love which they had toward all the saints,' and to report that 'the truth of the gospel,' which he had himself taught them, was 'bearing fruit and increasing.' What a word of encouragement this must have been to St Paul in his hours of depressing captivity. How he must have welcomed the visit of one of whom he could say, 'who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.'

(2) But there was cause for grave anxiety in the future. The letter to the Colossian Church was written for the specific purpose of warning the members of that Church against forsaking the pure gospel preached by Epaphras, and being led astray into doctrines and conduct inconsistent with loyalty to Christ as their Head. Such was the mingled character of the news which this 'faithful minister' had brought.

[1] A. N. Brayshaw, *The Quakers*, 76.

There was no lack of opportunity for intercourse on this subject, so engrossing to both these men. Epaphras is spoken of by St Paul as 'my fellow-captive in Christ Jesus' (Philem. 23). Whether the captivity of Epaphras was compulsory, or voluntarily endured in order to cheer St Paul's loneliness, cannot be determined. In the latter case the word 'fellow-captive' was a graceful and almost playful tribute to the self-sacrifice of his friend, and in either case it suggests many a long anxious conference between the Apostle, to whom we must attribute the virtual founding of the Church at Colossæ, and the missionary who actually 'made disciples' of its members.

2. Epaphras was a man of prayer. His faithfulness and perseverance in service are indicated by the words 'faithful minister,' while one active expression of this 'ministry' is singled out above all others as marking the true pastor of the flock—'always striving for you in his prayers, that ye may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.' He was not content to have founded a Church and made many converts, his heart yearned for their 'perfection,' and it was a daily 'struggle' with him to strengthen and encourage them to stand 'in all the will of God.' Epaphras had learned one of 'this world's' great maxims, that 'to put to sea *without constancy* is a voyage that ends in nothing.' He not only cast the net, but also drew it carefully to land.

¶ When I returned to Cambridge in 1899 as Principal of Ridley, I received a letter from an old student at the Hall, then a missionary in East Africa, in which he said, 'I had rather you teach ten men to pray than a hundred to preach.' It is a deep truth. Underneath all our outward expressions of religion there must lie something which belongs to all, which inspires all with reality, and that is the spirit of prayer. You cannot preach, you cannot work, you cannot be a Christian *without prayer*.[1]

As we climb the heights of prayer, our main work is intercession. Epaphras strove without ceasing for his brethren. The power of intercession is not to be measured; it goes out into the endless connections and sympathies of the spiritual world, reversing, influencing, succouring, consoling, in numberless ways.

[1] T. W. Drury, *The Prison-Ministry of St Paul*, 105.

The course of prayer who knows?
It springs in silence where it will,
Springs out of sight and flows
A lonely rill.

But streams shall meet it by-and-by
From thousand sympathetic hearts,
Together swelling high
Their chant of many parts.

Love prays, because before love can bless it must be allied with wisdom and power. It is hard to know what is best. It is so easy for love to injure when it is seeking good, it is so difficult to make its small means of succour available for the need it sees that true love is always prayerful. And it prays for the highest: 'that ye may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.' The aspiration is not after a general but after a perfect conformity to the Divine. The saints are, as it were, rough-hewn by morality and conscience and the ordinary influences of grace; Epaphras asks that the last touches of the finger of God may mould them to his perfect loveliness.

Epaphras could not have prayed with such tender warmth unless he had sought directly to bless and help his friends. Prayer is a suggesting grace, and it is answered often by guidance to him who offers it. There are people who make conscientious provision for those who depend on them, by unceasing toil and much sacrifice. That is not enough; the heart must be refreshed. Lacordaire wrote: 'Above all other things be kind. Kindness is the one thing through which we can the most resemble God and the most disarm men. Kindness in mutual relations is the principal charm of life.'

The Friendships of St Paul

Philem. 24.—'Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow-workers' (R.V.).

2 Tim. iv. 10.—'Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.'

An aspect of St Paul's life and character not often noticed is the need he shows for human intercourse and help, the relations in which he stood towards his intimate friends. This is somewhat different from his relations with the different churches he founded, the group of converts he made at every step in his great missionary journeys. In a sense the two subjects are alike at least in this that Paul always

gave more to others than he ever needed to receive, which is the privilege of the strong and the gifted. Alike to his most intimate friends, and to the great mass of Christian converts the Apostle was as one who served, who stood as master and teacher and adviser and ruler. He was so easily first in his magnificent qualities of brain and heart and soul that it seems absurd to speak of any mutual relation. All his converts were beloved friends towards whom he had the tenderest feelings, and his letters abound in instances of courtesy and sweet thoughtfulness and tender appeal to affection.

But like other men he had human needs for the closer intimacies, the need for an intercourse nearer than even that close tie. And there is for us all a great and useful lesson in this. We can put a man like St Paul so far from us in our contemplation of his virtues that he ceases really to influence us except as something to wonder at. We can think of him as so unapproachable, and look at his goodness as like the sunlight that strikes upon the stainless peaks, that his example has for us no real inspiration. This is a distinct danger when we realize what things there were in his life which divide him from his commonplace brethren. His untiring energy, his greatness of soul, his superiority to the things that tempt other men, the loftiness of mind which raised him above jealousies and envyings, the unselfishness of life which makes us feel poor and mean beside him, all the phenomenal qualities that constituted his greatness, all tend to isolate him from our level. He rises more than once almost above the high-water mark of human nature, as when he says with such fervid sincerity, 'I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren's sake.' He seemed to forget that he was a man when, in the passion of a wondrous love, he counted as dross all things for which other men strove. He seemed above human frailty and human passion. God knows how small we men feel beside such a man, who had won his sainthood with blood.

It is good for us, then, to note the common grounds of his life with ours, not that the idol has feet of clay as mean natures love to remark, but that he never posed as an idol at all, that he was human in his every need. It is good to note the times when Paul comes near us and opens his heart; for it may be that the inspiring thought may grip us with that quick intensity which cuts the breath that even we may in our measure become like him. He hungered for the help and sympathy of his friends, and felt desolate and helpless when he was deprived of them.

1. There is this to be noticed first of all about the Apostle's friendships, that it was not merely a relation of master and disciples. It was that in many cases and added a new and sweet bond between them. But he also seemed to lean on them for sympathy and help, as for example Titus, of whom he says, 'When we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; . . . nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus.'

¶ 'When two friends meet after a period of absence,' says Edward Irving, 'and exchange their various experiences, recount their dangers past and their present condition, they are refreshed again; they open up their schemes to one another, their difficulties, and their fears; and before the good countenance and encouragement of our friend, our difficulties, like the great mountain before Zerubbabel, become a plain; we feel like new men again; and we go forth to renew the struggle in the sea of troubles wherewith we are encompassed.'

Or, again, he writes to Timothy with a tone of pleading in the words, 'Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.' He was not afraid to let his comrades know how much he leant on them and prized their faithfulness; he never tried to pose as self-contained as smaller men do. He was not afraid to let his friends know how he loved them, and never grudged praise to his associates.[1]

Oh, gift of God, my friend!
Whose face has brought th' Eternal nigh;
No sermon like thy life doth tend
To turn my gaze toward the sky.

Oh, ray of light, my friend!
When sorrow's gloom made life so drear,

[1] Hugh Black, *University Sermons*, 189.

Then comfort sweet thy words did lend,
As if Christ spake, ' Be of good cheer ! '

Oh, rock of strength, my friend !
When shifting sands beneath my feet,
And changing scenes my steps attend,
Thy truth and constancy are sweet.

Oh, home of rest, my friend !
When wearied with the toil and rush
My wistful gaze on thee I bend,
Then o'er my spirit falls a hush.

I clasp thy hand, my friend !
Thank God that thou art here ;
I am not worthy He should send
To me a gift so dear.[1]

With what opulent, exuberant, reiterated kindness St Paul speaks of those who have, even in the smallest way, shown themselves friendly and helpful to him ! To read the Epistles in Moffatt's vigorous translation is to get a new view of St Paul's passionate loyalty and kindliness of feeling. How eagerly he makes the most of small acts of helpfulness ; how strongly he emphasizes each small service ; how deeply each expression of sympathy and devotion was treasured in his heart ; how much he makes of every good quality, exulting in it as in new-found spoil ! Here are some characteristic salutations culled from some of his Epistles : ' Salute that tried Christian, Apelles . . . Salute the beloved Persis ; she has worked very hard in the Lord. Salute that choice Christian, Rufus ; also his mother, who has been a mother to me. If Timotheus arrives, see that you make him feel quite at home. . . . I have no one like him for genuine interest in your welfare. I am glad that Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus have arrived . . . you should appreciate men like that.' From beginning to end, the personal references of St Paul throb with a keen, sensitive, superlatively generous appreciation.[2]

2. There must have been great personal magnetism in Paul which gave him easy hold of men, but all his friends were tried by fire afterwards, and though some failed him as Demas, and the ranks were thinned by the loss of all fair-weather friends, yet the tie that bound them was stronger far than any mere personal attraction. This has to be said about all Paul's friendships that they were conditioned by his work. His friends were all fellow-workers, all in sympathy with the great object for which he lived. Their relationship went down to bed-rock, and they could not be moved so long as each remained true. The first requisite for Paul was sympathy with the great work he had in hand. This seemed sometimes to make him a little hard and relentless, as when he refused to take Mark on the second missionary tour because he had turned back in the first journey and went not with them to the work. Paul with his eager impetuous nature, unable to understand vacillation and almost contemptuous of weakness, would not lean any more on what seemed a broken reed. He preferred to separate altogether from Barnabas rather than let the craven Mark come with them. But when the young man proved himself true and staunch, he won Paul's admiration and love. The warm-hearted Apostle from his references afterwards seems almost eager to make up to Mark for his former poor opinion of him.

¶ It is a thing that may happen to any of us, —to be deserted by a friend. It hurts. But the measure of the damage depends on how we take it.

What does it matter whether we were right or the former friend was right ? The question is, are we strong enough to carry on without his loved support ?

There is no need to quarrel with him or blame him. Our refuge is in our work. He takes one road, we take another. The goal is not changed.

Wish him Godspeed. Push ahead. If you are really working in earnest your work will bring you new companions. Where the trails meet again your old friend will greet you with joy. Friendship does not mean uniformity of opinion, but unity of purpose and mutual goodwill.[1]

It was not exclusiveness which made Paul limit his comradeship to those who were like-minded. It was essential for the great work to which he bent every thought and energy. If a man had no interest in Christ, and in the extension of the Kingdom of God, he could be no fit friend for Paul. If a man turned back from the large venture for the world, as Demas did in the hour of trial, it was a stab to Paul's heart and to that love which lay deepest in Paul's heart. To him it would be as treachery

[1] Una, *In Life's Garden*, 12.
[2] E. Herman, *The Touch of God*, 174.

[1] van Dyke, *Light My Candle*, 217.

to his Lord, and friendship under these circumstances could only be a name. This is not due to any tone of hardness in Paul's mind, a narrowness which made him sacrifice anyone who could not see eye to eye with him. For, after all, it is the one essential condition of all true friendship.

The only permanent relationship among men is a spiritual one. It does not mean thinking alike, and being alike in temperament and capacity, but it must mean some community in the things of the soul. If another has no sympathy with us in our highest thoughts and noblest passions and holiest aspirations, it is only desecrating the fine word to speak of friendship. It may be partnership, or intercourse more or less pleasant, but it cannot be *fellowship*. If Paul goes on to his great service pouring out his noble heart for high ends, and Demas loves this present world, what can it be but separation? The only permanent relationship is one of spiritual community: the only permanent severance of hearts is lack of that community. Be not unequally yoked, is a solemn word. Unless men love the same love, and are in sympathy in the high things of the soul, it can only be a form of friendship denying the power of it.

For Demas or any other to have had the chance of friendship with Paul and to have bartered it away for some poor pittance of worldly good is a tragedy. Perhaps he did not realize of how much worth it was to gain a smile from Paul, until he lost the chance of doing it. All that he would gain from his desertion, however much it brought him, was a poor exchange for the days and nights with Paul, and the fellowship of the faith of Christ, and a share in the service of the Kingdom of Heaven. It was more than Paul's friendship that Demas lost.[1]

¶ You remember Bunyan's story of the 'Man with the Muck-rake.' The scene is laid in the Interpreter's house and Christiana and her family are there. The Interpreter showed them 'into a room where was a man that could look no way but downwards, with a muck-rake in his hand: there stood also one over his head with a celestial crown in his hand, and proffered him that crown for his muck-rake: but the man did neither look up nor regard, but raked to himself the straws, the small sticks and dust of the floor. Then said Christiana, I persuade myself that I know somewhat of the meaning of this; for this is the figure of a man of this world; is it not, good sir? Thou hast said right, said he; and his muck-rake doth show his carnal mind. And, whereas thou seest him rather give heed to take up straws and sticks, and the dust of the floor, than to do what He says that calls to him from above, with the celestial crown in His hand; it is to show that heaven is but as a fable to some, and that things here are counted the only things substantial. Now, whereas it was also showed thee that this man could look no way but downwards, it is to let thee know that earthly things, when they are with power upon men's minds, quite carry their hearts away from God.'

[1] Hugh Black.

Our Debt to St Luke

Philem. 24.—'Luke, my fellow-worker' (R.V.).

THERE can be little or no doubt that the evangelist Luke is to be identified with Luke, the beloved physician, and one of the companions of St Paul, and equally little doubt as to the identity of the author of the Third Gospel with the author of the Acts. In neither of his works, however, does the writer *name* himself, and all the knowledge regarding Luke that we can gather comes from three passages in the Pauline Epistles (Col. iv. 14; Philem. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11), and from what are generally known as the 'we' sections of the Acts. The first of these passages, by distinguishing between the greetings of Luke and certain others and the greetings of those 'who are of the circumcision,' makes it clear that, unlike all the other writers of the New Testament, Luke was a Gentile by birth—according to tradition he was a Syrian of Antioch—and, further, that he had at one time followed the profession of a physician.

It is not improbable, indeed, that it was owing to his medical knowledge that Luke first attached himself to Paul, on the eve of the latter's departure from Troas to Europe. What more natural than that, on finding that he could minister to Paul's bodily relief, he should determine to accompany the Apostle on a journey which to him, as a Gentile, must have seemed fraught with such momentous consequences? In any case, a bond of intercourse was at this time formed between the two men, which was henceforth to be of the closest and most enduring

kind. For though on Paul's departure from Philippi Luke was left behind, perhaps to establish and confirm the work that had been begun, he rejoined Paul upon his return there on the Third Missionary Journey, and, so far as we know, did not again leave him. He certainly shared with the Apostle his first and second imprisonments at Rome, for it is during the first of these that we find Paul sending the greeting from him already referred to, and it is during the second that his constancy is rewarded with the noble tribute: 'Only Luke is with me.'

Let us ask ourselves what is the debt which we owe to Luke—this cultivated Gentile, with his scientific training, his literary and artistic gifts, his cosmopolitan sympathies, his romantic delight in adventure—what message does he bring to us, what elements does he contribute to our conception of religion?

1. We are principally indebted to Luke for our insight into the pardoning love of God in Christ for sinners. The 'beloved physician' clearly had a large heart himself; he was filled with profoundest pity for the sorrows and sins of men. It was natural, therefore, that in setting forth our Lord he should seek to present Him primarily as the large-hearted Saviour of the human race, the Revelation to each and all of God's boundless charity. How many magnificent passages, expressive of the greatness of this Divine redeeming love, are found in Luke alone! He alone preserves that inimitable parable of the prodigal welcomed home, the recital of which always brought tears into the eyes of St Augustine; he alone relates the stories of the sinner in Simon's house, who loved much and was much forgiven, and of the robber to whom Paradise was promised on the Cross; he first records the most wonderful saying in the whole of the Gospels—'The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.' And these are but a few of the instances. Again and again, more fully and emphatically than any of the other evangelists, Luke reveals and illustrates the Saviour's pitying love which impelled Him to the rescue of the fallen and the hopeless. He it is, as Dante remarked long ago, who describes most fully 'the meekness and gentleness of Christ.'

¶ As the poet of the *Christian Year* puts it:

Whose joy is, to the wandering sheep
To tell of the great Shepherd's love;

To learn of mourners while they weep
The music that makes mirth above;

Who makes the Saviour all his theme,
The Gospel all his pride and praise.

And does not this Gospel of Mercy 'find us' in the present day? Surely the more we come to know ourselves, the more profoundly are we disquieted by a sense that things are wrong with us. We have offended; we have done those things which we ought not to have done; we have strayed in tortuous and forbidden paths. And when, in conscious guilt, we turn to modern science or psychology or philosophy, it is poor comfort that we gather. 'There is no forgiveness in Nature,' is the verdict of Huxley. 'Nothing we ever do is in strict scientific literalness wiped out,' writes William James. The moralist proclaims to us that 'the consequences of sin are pitiless,' and the poet for our warning draws his sombre picture of life's 'lost days' lingering on, 'each one a murdered self,' to all eternity.

It is then, when all our world appears united in condemning us, that there comes to our aid the merciful Redeemer of the Evangelist. 'He pitied us'—so speaks a primitive Christian of beautiful spirit—'He had compassion, He saved us, for He saw that we had no hope of salvation except from Him; He called us when we were not, and from not being He willed that we should be.' Here, indeed, is a Person who can satisfy our need—One who can really deliver us from the burden of past transgressions, and release us from the present thraldom of evil affections; One who can heal and re-fashion and repair; One who can offer us forgiveness, and, what is even greater, make us meet to be forgiven. This is Luke's grand message to an age of pessimism.

2. Turn now to another lesson that is taught us by Luke. Just as this writer, more than any of the other evangelists, enables us to realize God's saving love for sinners, so more than any other does he accentuate the dangers which lie about the path of those whom God would save. Particularly he is the preacher of the peril of prosperity. The peril of wealth, the peril of pleasure, the peril of the easy life of comfort and security—this is the subject of his repeated warnings. The most radical teachings concerning the good things of this world are to be found in the Third Gospel. Here only,

for example, are woes pronounced on the rich and the satisfied and the merry and the popular; here only have we the parable of Dives damned, and that of the Fool who heaped up treasure for himself, but was not 'rich toward God'; here possessions are personified as a demon—a demon of unrighteousness—and the solemn word is heard, 'Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.' So determined, indeed, is the hostility of Luke towards property and prosperity that one scholar has described him, not without some show of reason, as 'the Socialist-Evangelist.'

And yet neither Luke himself nor the Master whose instructions he so faithfully delivers was concerned directly with the social question. To Jesus Christ, at any rate, the problem of prosperity was but part of a much greater and more complex problem—the problem of redeeming human life and character; and He thought of worldly happiness only in relation to its effect on these. Thus He had not any quarrel with capital as such. He assuredly never taught that it is wicked to be wealthy, or proclaimed any necessary and inevitable antagonism between our business and our Father's business, between great profits and great piety. No man is barred from the Kingdom of Heaven just because he is well-to-do. But if Christ did not say that it is impossible to be rich and good, He did say that it is difficult. He did hold, beyond all question, that prosperity is a snare—a danger most immediate, most insidious, and most terrible; and from the depths of His pitiful heart He pitied the prosperous man, as one who is placed by his circumstances in a position of disadvantage, and who is running an awful risk of missing the best in life.

3. Let us notice one other lesson that Luke teaches us. He stands as the type and representative of Christian humanism and culture. Not only was he a traveller and a man of science and a scholar; as an historian his merits have been proved beyond dispute, while as a literary genius he is probably unequalled by any early Christian writer. Renan declares that his Gospel is the most beautiful book in the world, and another critic aptly designates the author as 'the poet-painter among the evangelists.'

¶ An interesting tradition, which is apparently as old as the sixth century, represents Luke as being himself a painter, and this has led to his being chosen as the patron-saint of many academies of art. Certain very ancient pictures, notably a Madonna in the Church of S. Maria Maggiore at Rome, are actually claimed as his workmanship. But his influence over Christian art is placed on a surer footing when we remember how readily painters, both in early and in mediæval times, selected their subjects from the scenes depicted in the pages both of his Gospel and of the Acts.

Give honour unto Luke Evangelist;
For he it was (the aged legends say)
Who first taught Art to fold her hands and pray.[1]

Shall we not, then, be justified if we regard Luke as teaching us by example the profound and weighty lesson that all that is best in culture, all the treasures of knowledge and imagination and emotion, should be sought out and used for Christ? Too often even now men talk the old ridiculous nonsense about culture and faith being enemies. Whatever really makes for spiritual life and growth, whatever illumines and invigorates and upbuilds, must be in harmony with religion. There is a place in Christianity for all fair and noble things—for poetry, described as the record of 'the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds'; for music, which, in Carlyle's phrase, 'leads us to the edge of the infinite'; for painting, which, reflecting what is loveliest in the world, vouchsafes us a fleeting vision of the 'altogether lovely'; for all the truths of science or of philosophic thought, which are but 'broken lights' of Him who is the Truth itself. Not one of these is superfluous in the economy of God. Science as well as conscience has a sacred work to do, and one portal of the Temple is a gate which is called Beautiful. Let us seek, then, to widen our views of that which pertains to our faith. Religion in the twentieth century certainly ought not to be insular or narrow or reactionary. It should draw into its life all strong and healthful influences. All sweetness and light, all knowledge and skill, all beauty and song, all that educates the reason or cultivates the taste or awakens pure emotion, it should claim for its own by the power of the Spirit, and use—use for God's glory and for the service of His kingdom.

[1] D. G. Rossetti.

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